STARBLAZER

FANTASY FICTION IN PICTURES No. 265

32p

THE TERMINATION

A CARTER STORY

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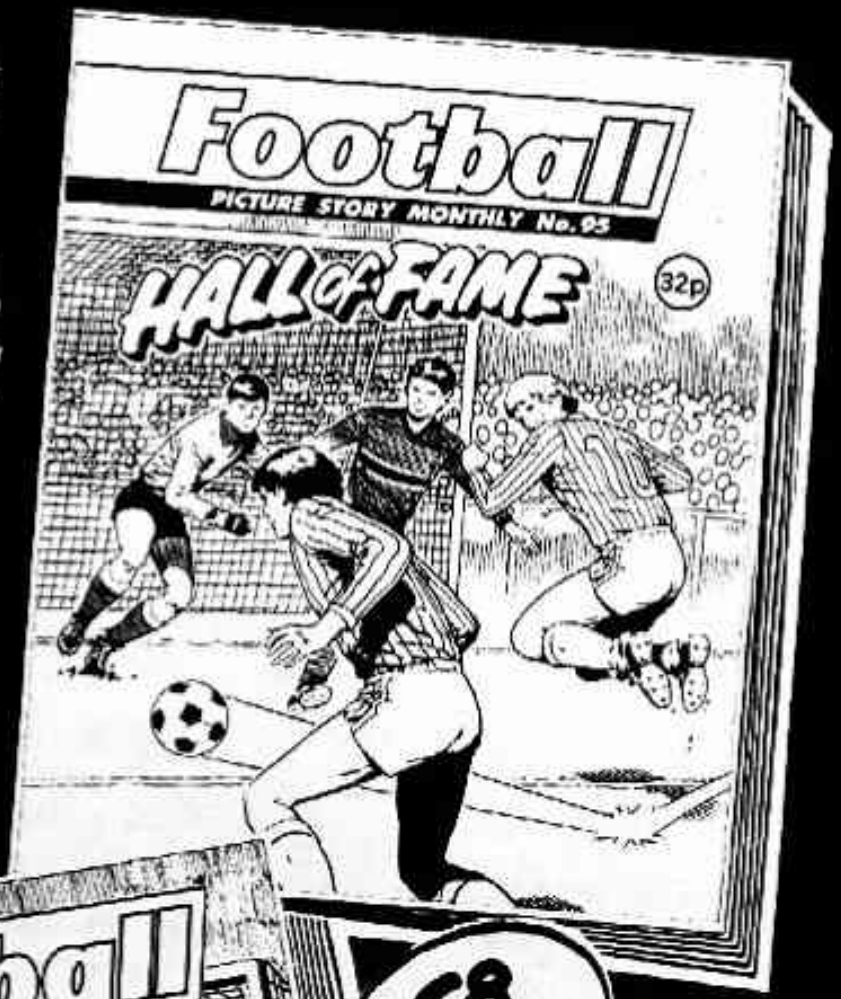
IF YOU'RE A FOOTBALL FAN, YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MISS THESE!

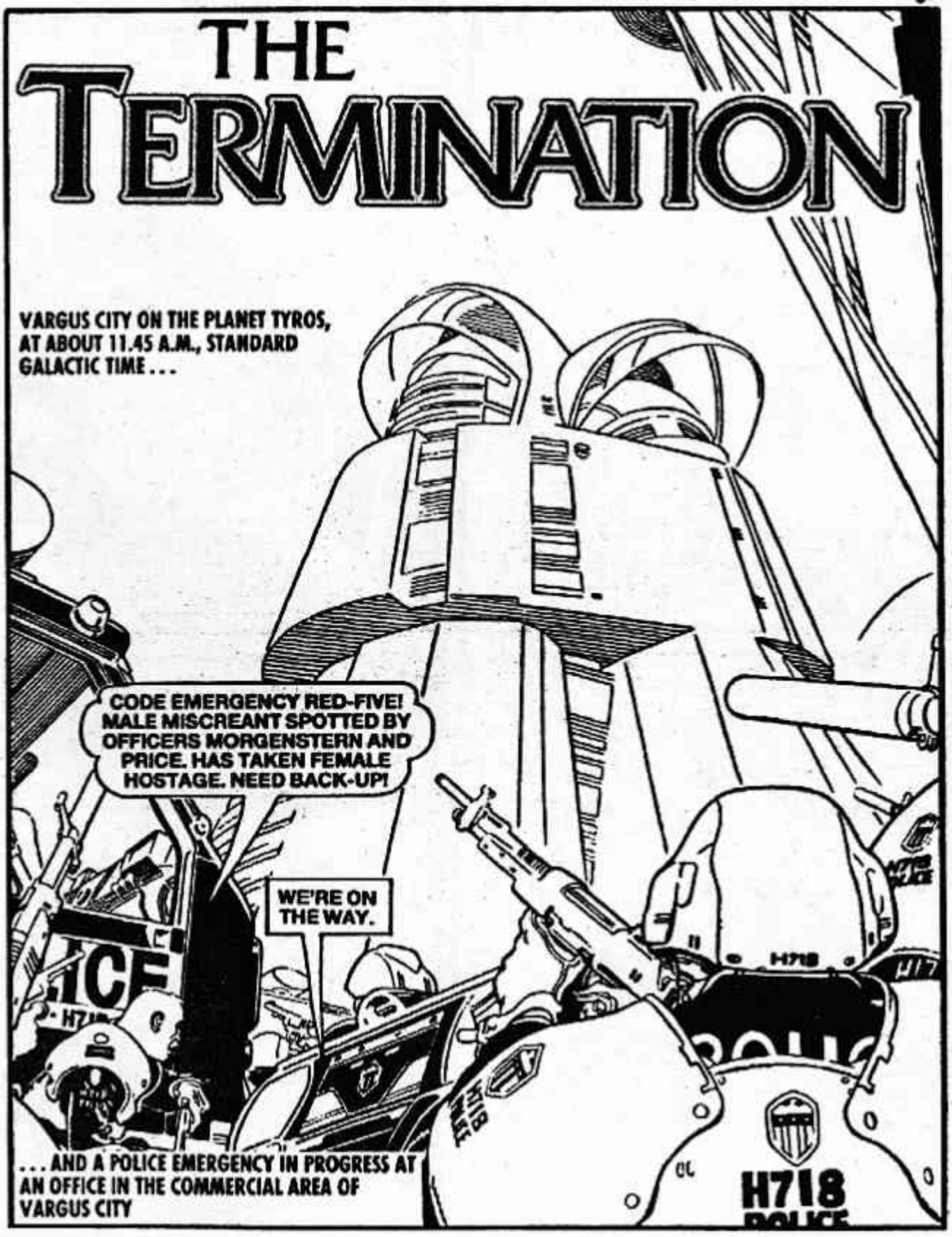


68 PAGES EACH

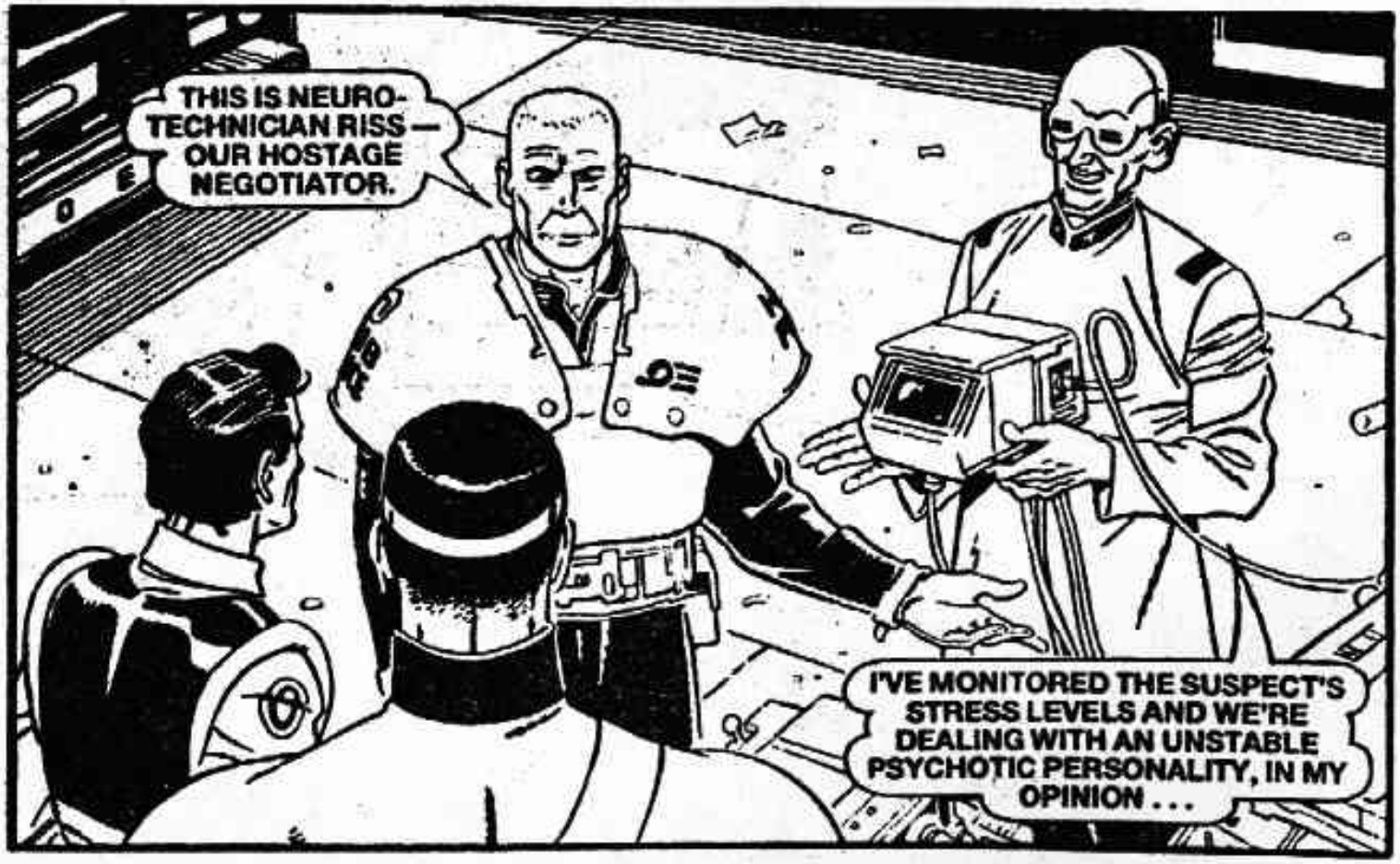
FOOTBALL LIBRARIES Nos. 95+96

NOW ON SALE 32p

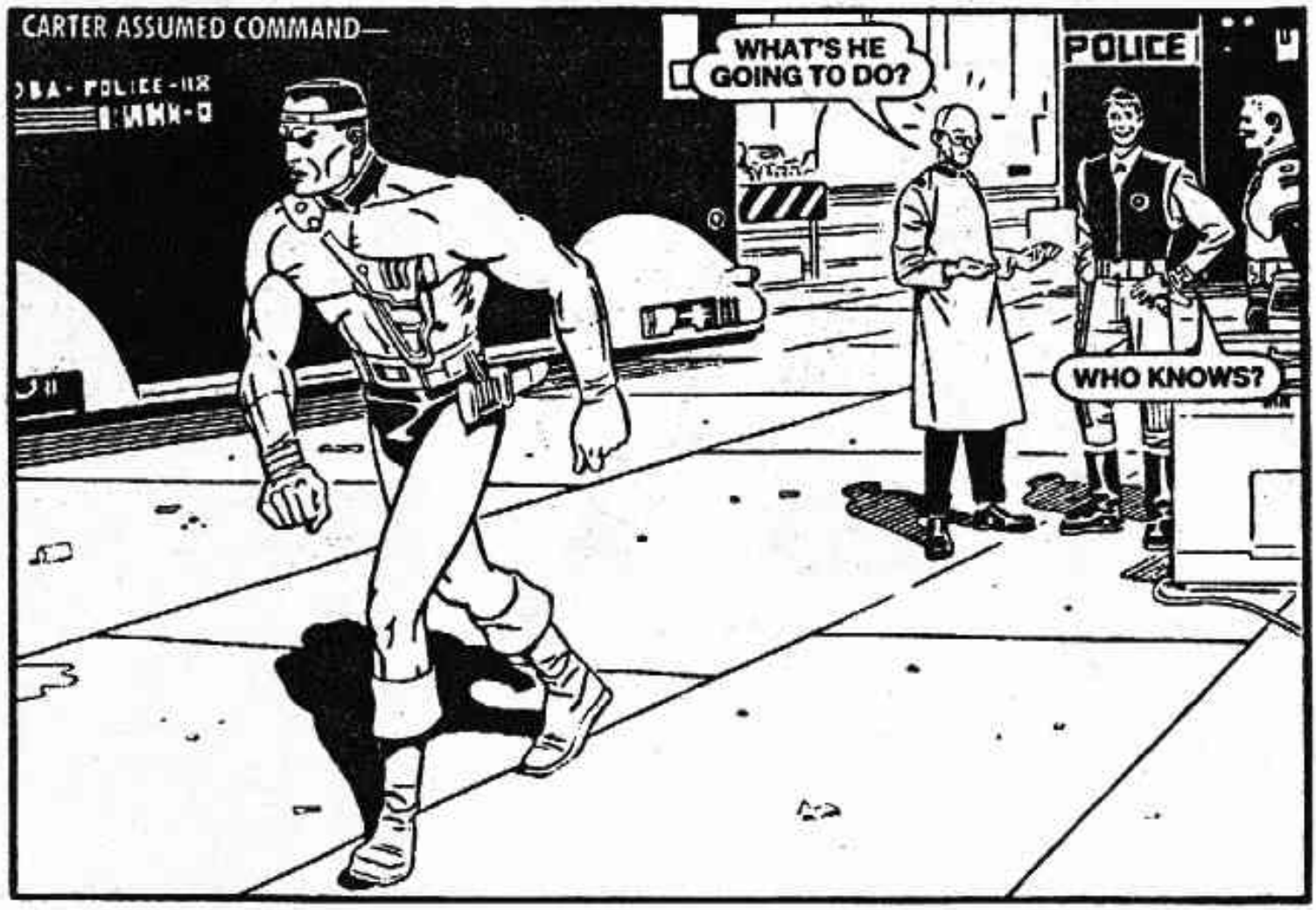
THE TERMINATION



THE BACK-UP ARRIVED—
WHO'S IN CHARGE?
I AM! THEY'VE SENT YOU, CARTER! I'D HATE TO BE IN THAT CRIMO'S SHOES NOW!


THIS IS NEURO-TECHNICIAN RISS — OUR HOSTAGE NEGOTIATOR.
I'VE MONITORED THE SUSPECT'S STRESS LEVELS AND WE'RE DEALING WITH AN UNSTABLE PSYCHOTIC PERSONALITY, IN MY OPINION . . .

JUST CUT THE PSYCHOLOGICAL JARGON AND GET TO THE BOTTOM LINE.
ER . . . YES! THE HOSTAGE IS IN GRAVE DANGER.


CARTER ASSUMED COMMAND—
WHAT'S HE GOING TO DO?
POLICE
WHO KNOWS?

MEANWHILE, INSIDE THE BUILDING—
HEY, FOUR-EYES . . . I ASKED FOR TRANSPORTATION TO ANOTHER GALAXY! WHAT'S KEEPING YOU?
WE'RE DEALING WITH YOUR REQUEST, PLEASE BE PATIENT.

DON'T MESS WITH ME! IF I DON'T SHIP OUT OF HERE IN THE NEXT FIVE MINUTES I'M GOING TO VAPORISE HER BRAINS!

IN THE BUILDING NEXT DOOR . . .
KEEP HIM TALKING, RISSI! NEED TO CALCULATE HIS PRECISE LOCATION.
AFFIRMATIVE, SIR!

CARTER WAS USING THERMAL IMAGERS WHICH COULD SEE THROUGH SOLID OBJECTS BY PICKING UP BODY HEAT.
DISTANCE TO TARGET: 76.5 METRES LIFE FORMS: TWO HUMANOIDS LIGHT! GOOD 85% LUMINOSITY.
SHOULD BE JUST ABOUT HERE . . .

CARTER'S CAREFULLY COMPUTED JUMP ENDED SPOT ON TARGET—

AAARGH!

CARTER, THE MANDROID, THE PART HUMAN MISSILE, WOULDN'T HAVE TO MAKE AN ARREST REPORT, JUST SIGN A DEATH CERTIFICATE.

I. . . I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S . . YOU!
CODE GREEN-ZERO! SUSPECT HAS BEEN NEUTRALIZED AND THE HOSTAGE IS ALIVE.

WE'D BETTER GET YOU TO THE HOSPITAL, MISS!
AND TAKE THAT THING TO THE MORTUARY.

I'M GOING TO TAKE SOME PERSONAL TIME, NOLAN. I'D BE GRATEFUL IF YOU COULD SUBMIT A FULL REPORT TO HEADQUARTERS.
YES, SIR.

WHAT'S GOING ON? CARTER'S NEVER TAKEN ANY PERSONAL TIME . . . HE LIVES AND BREATHES THE JOB!

CARTER HAD TO TAKE PERSONAL TIME BECAUSE THE COMPUTERISED SECTION OF HIS BRAIN WAS BEING INUNDATED WITH THOUGHTS NORMALLY TUCKED SAFELY AWAY.
LAURA — THE GIRL I WAS GOING TO MARRY, BACK IN THE DAYS WHEN I WAS ALL HUMAN . . .

THEY FIRST MET ON TERRAN-TWO, WHERE THE GALACTIC FEDERATION COUNCIL WAS BASED . . .
SEE YOU TOMORROW, LAURA! AND DON'T BE LATE — WE HAVE A MEETING SCHEDULED FOR 10.30!
pargon
hyper computer systems
I KNOW — SEE YOU!

LAURA WAS DEEP IN THOUGHT AND DIDN'T SEE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER, PROVISIONAL, FRANCIS CARTER.
OWW!
ATTACKING A POLICE OFFICER — THAT'S A CLASS "D" OFFENCE!
POLICE

920-51
ARE YOU GOING TO ARREST ME?
AS THIS IS YOUR FIRST OFFENCE, A SIMPLE CAUTION WOULD BE APPROPRIATE, MISS . . .

. . . PLUS YOUR VIDPHONE NUMBER.
I SHOULD COMPLAIN ABOUT POLICE HARASSMENT, BUT IT COULD BE INTERESTING BEING HARASSED BY YOU!

THEIR RELATIONSHIP DEEPENED, AND SIX MONTHS LATER . . .
Pierre
desing
A FEDERAL POLICE OFFICER'S PAY IS GOOD . . . BUT NOT THAT GOOD!
THAT DRESS LOOKS GREAT!

BUT IF YOU REALLY WANT IT . . .
NO, WE'RE GETTING MARRIED, REMEMBER? SO WE NEED TO SAVE.

JUST THEN . . .
WHEN YOU GET PROMOTED TO FEDERAL LAW COMMISSIONER YOU CAN BUY ME LOTS OF DRESSES LIKE THAT.
UH-OH! WE'VE GOT TROUBLE!
OFFICE

THERE'S A ROBBERY IN PROGRESS!
YOU'RE OFF DUTY!
A POLICE OFFICER IS NEVER OFF DUTY!

ONLY ABOUT FOUR SECONDS HAD PASSED — BUT TO CARTER TIME SEEMED TO STAND STILL!
HALT! I'M A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER! DROP YOUR WEAPONS, YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!
Girola
VAPORISE THAT IDIOT!

AS THE MEN OPENED FIRE CARTER REALISED HE WAS GOING TO HAVE TO DO THINGS THE HARD WAY . . .
GET DOWN!
THEY'RE SHOOTING AT US!

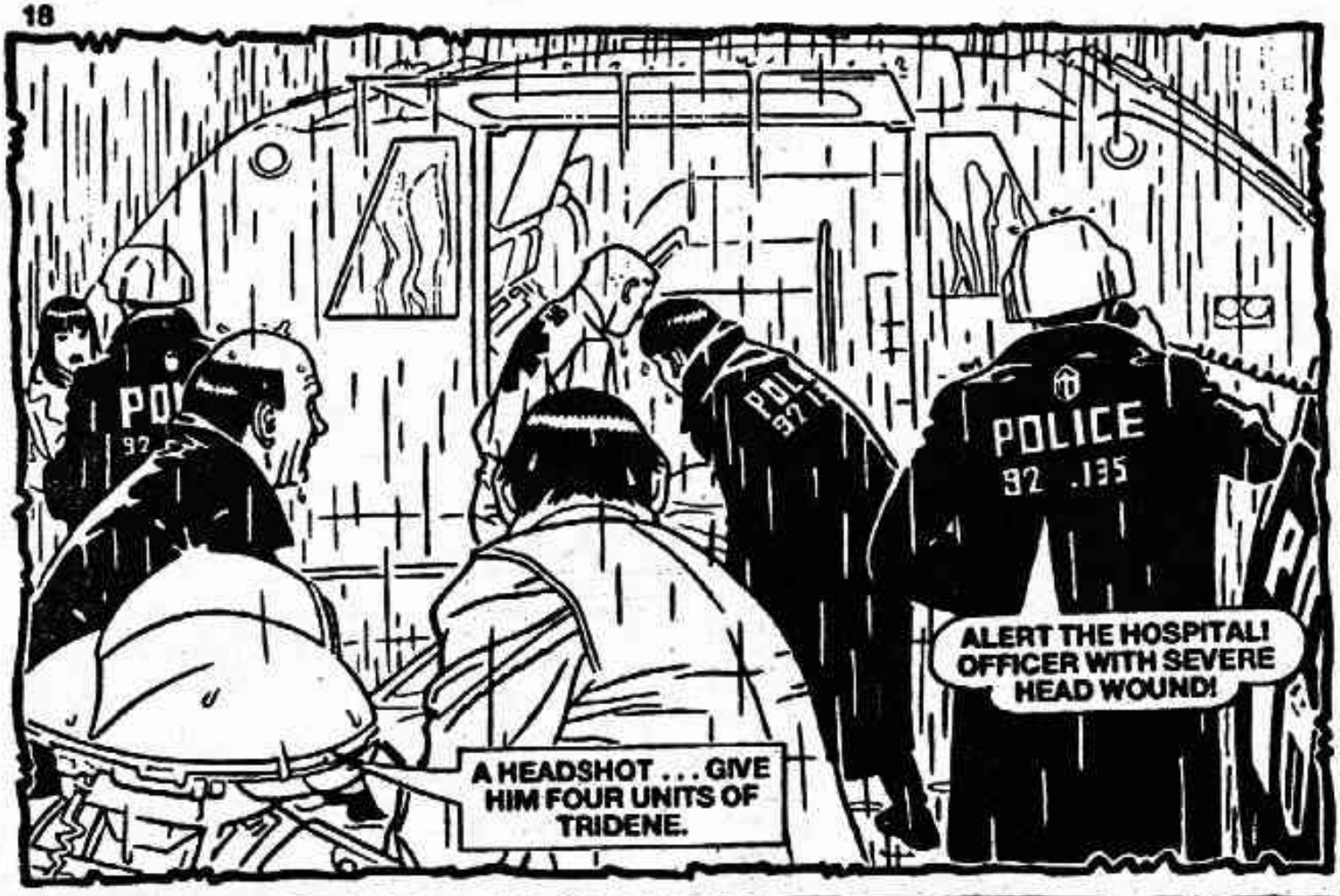
JUST COVER MY BACK — SHOOT ANYBODY WHO MOVES BEHIND ME.
BUT I'VE NEVER FIRED ONE OF THOSE THINGS BEFORE!

IT'S IDIOT PROOF! YOU JUST AIM THE WEAPON AND SQUEEZE THE TRIGGER — THE INTERNAL ELECTRONICS DO THE REST!

THIS TIME HE DIDN'T BOTHER TO SHOUT A WARNING . . .
URRRGGGHHH!
UGH!
. . . HE LET HIS POLICE ISSUE COLT/IBM PHOTONITE PISTOL DO THE TALKING!
AAAAA
THIS IS FOR MY PALS, COP!

THREE MINUTES PASSED BEFORE HELP ARRIVED . . .
NO! NO!

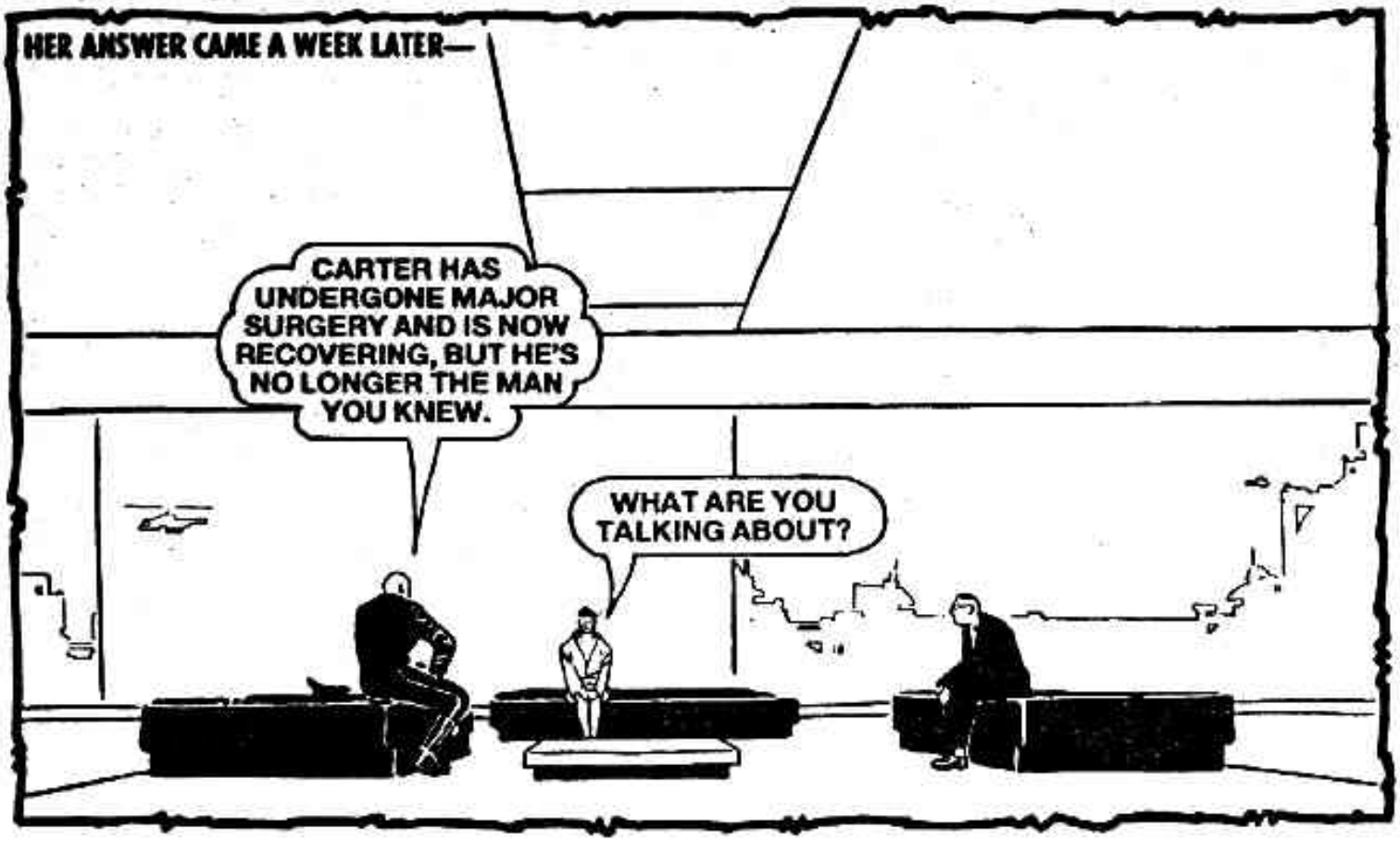
WE HAVE A CODE ALPHA MEDICAL EMERGENCY!
HE'S NOT BREATHING!

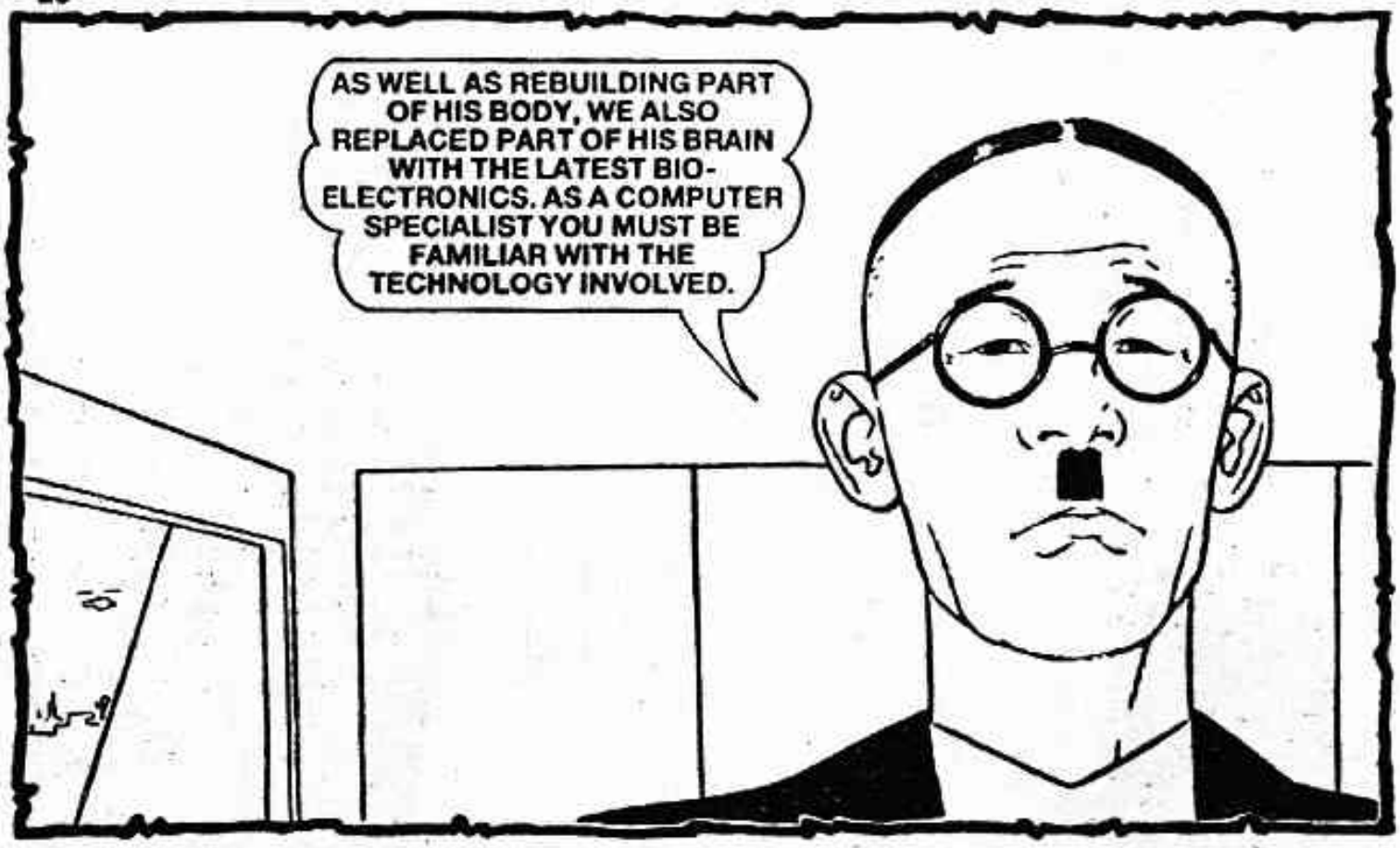

POLICE
92 .135
ALERT THE HOSPITAL! OFFICER WITH SEVERE HEAD WOUND!
A HEADSHOT . . . GIVE HIM FOUR UNITS OF TRIDENE.

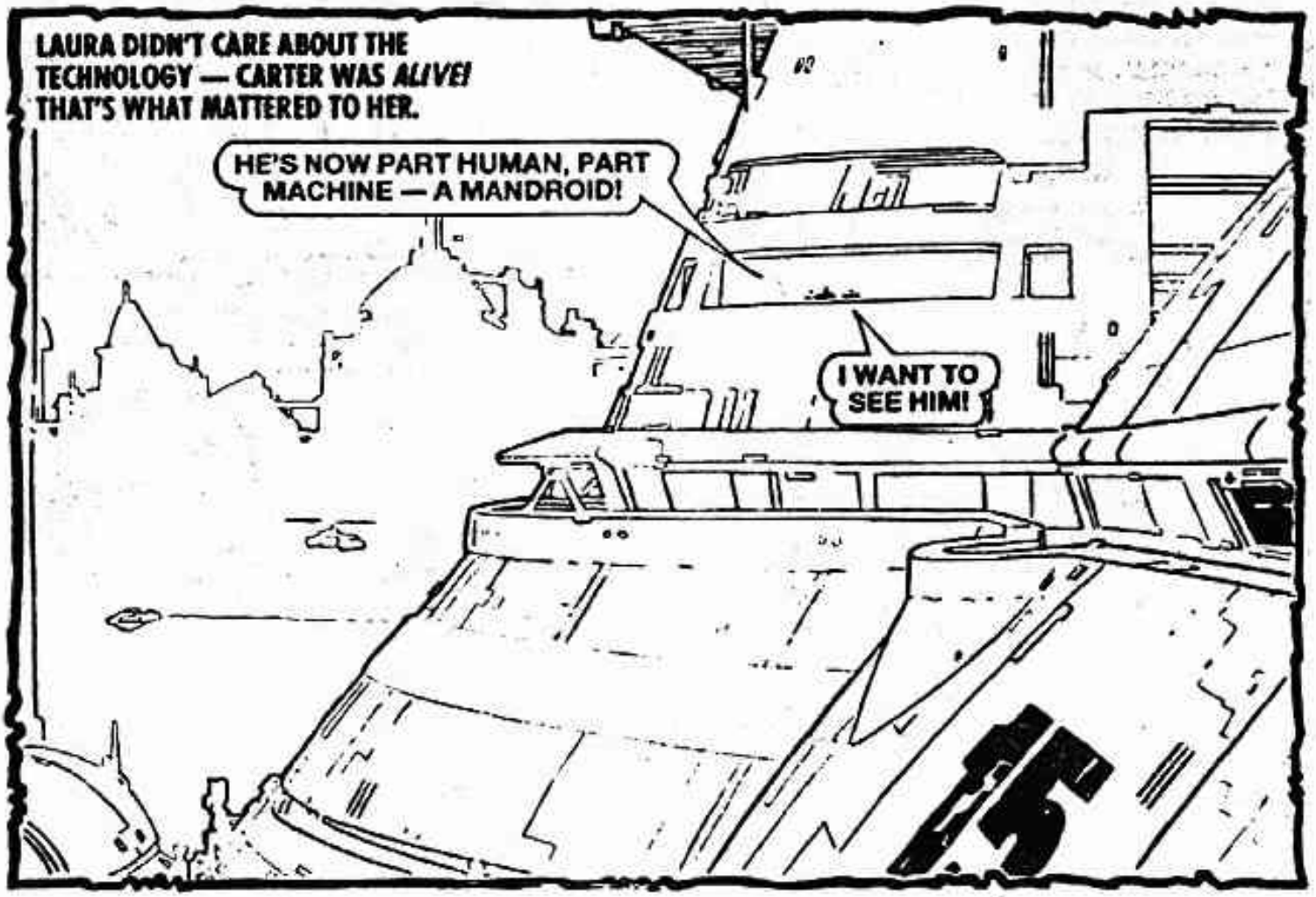
CARTER'S BRAIN HAD BEEN SEVERELY DAMAGED BY A LASER BLAST. TECHNICALLY HE WAS ALREADY DEAD . . .
MOST OF HIS FRONTAL LOBE HAS GONE! I WANT PROFESSOR TSIEN ON THIS ONE!
. . . BUT IN PUSHING FORWARD THE FRONTIERS OF SCIENCE, MODERN TECHNOLOGY HAD ALSO PUSHED BACK THE BORDERS OF DEATH.

DEPARTMENT OF BIO-METEOROLOGY
HOW IS HE?
WE'LL LET YOU KNOW AS SOON AS THE DOCTORS HAVE EXAMINED HIM.

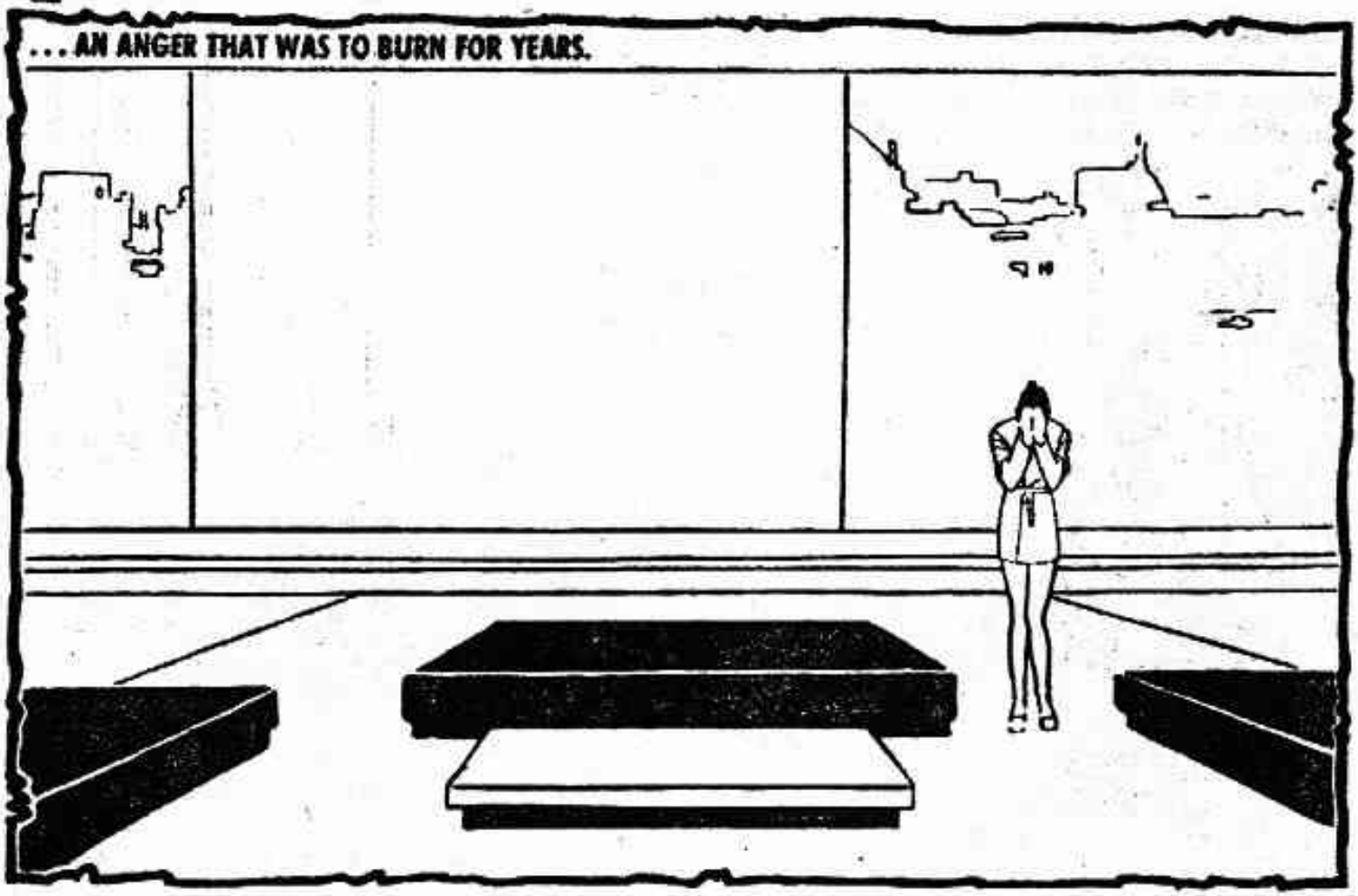
IT WAS MY FAULT . . . HE MUST LIVE!

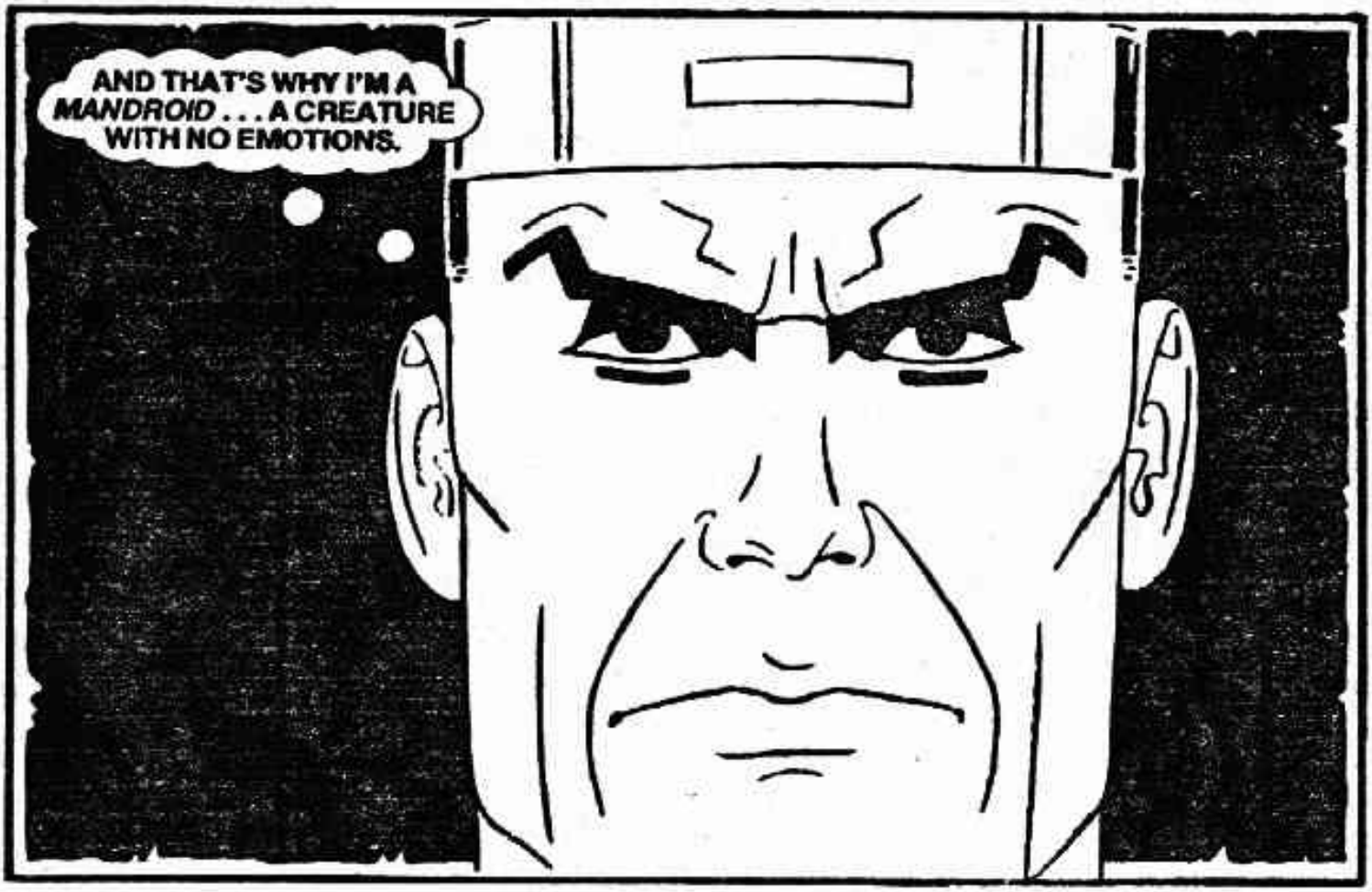

HER ANSWER CAME A WEEK LATER—
CARTER HAS UNDERGONE MAJOR SURGERY AND IS NOW RECOVERING, BUT HE'S NO LONGER THE MAN YOU KNEW.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

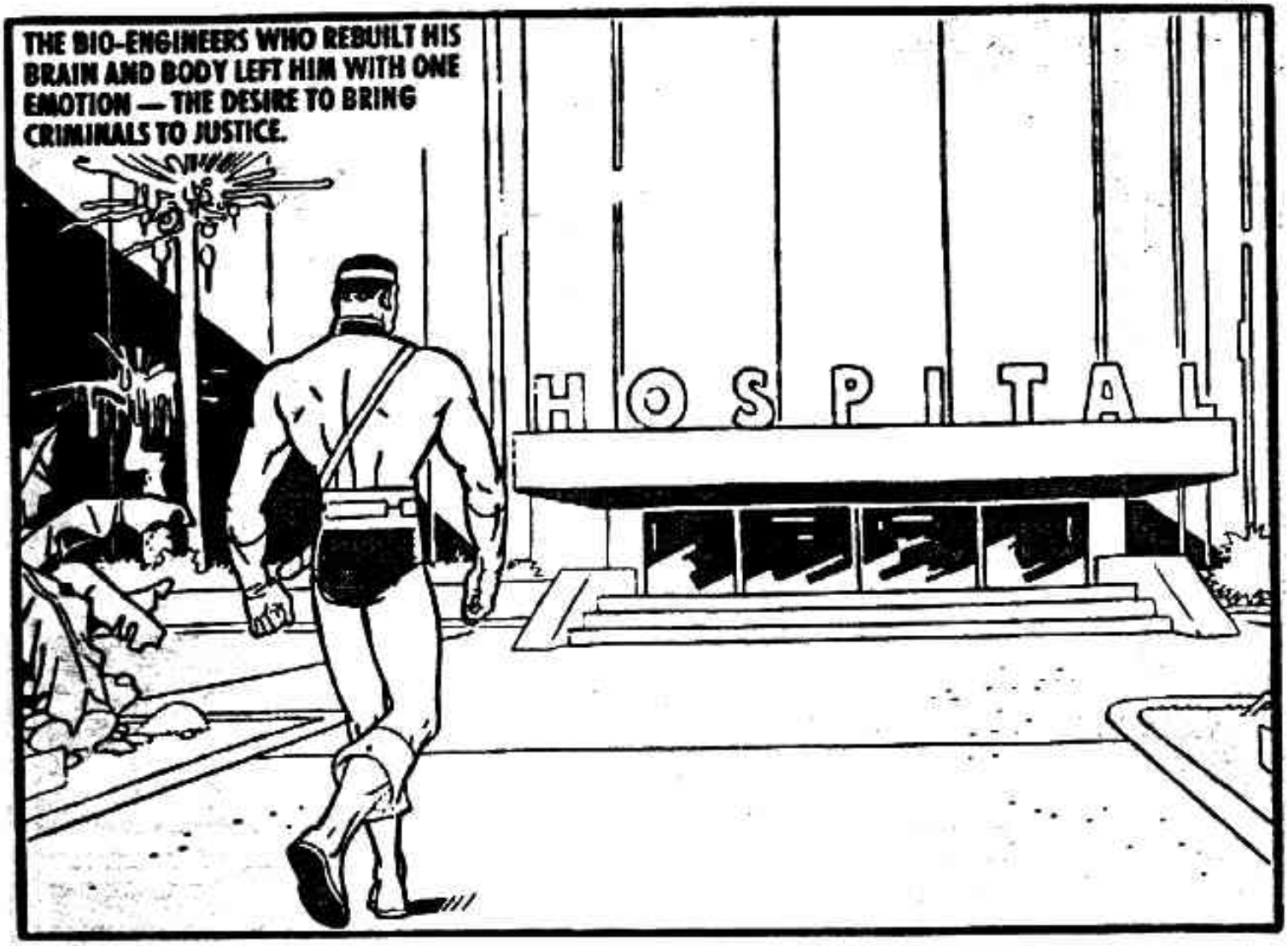

AS WELL AS REBUILDING PART OF HIS BODY, WE ALSO REPLACED PART OF HIS BRAIN WITH THE LATEST BIO-ELECTRONICS. AS A COMPUTER SPECIALIST YOU MUST BE FAMILIAR WITH THE TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED.

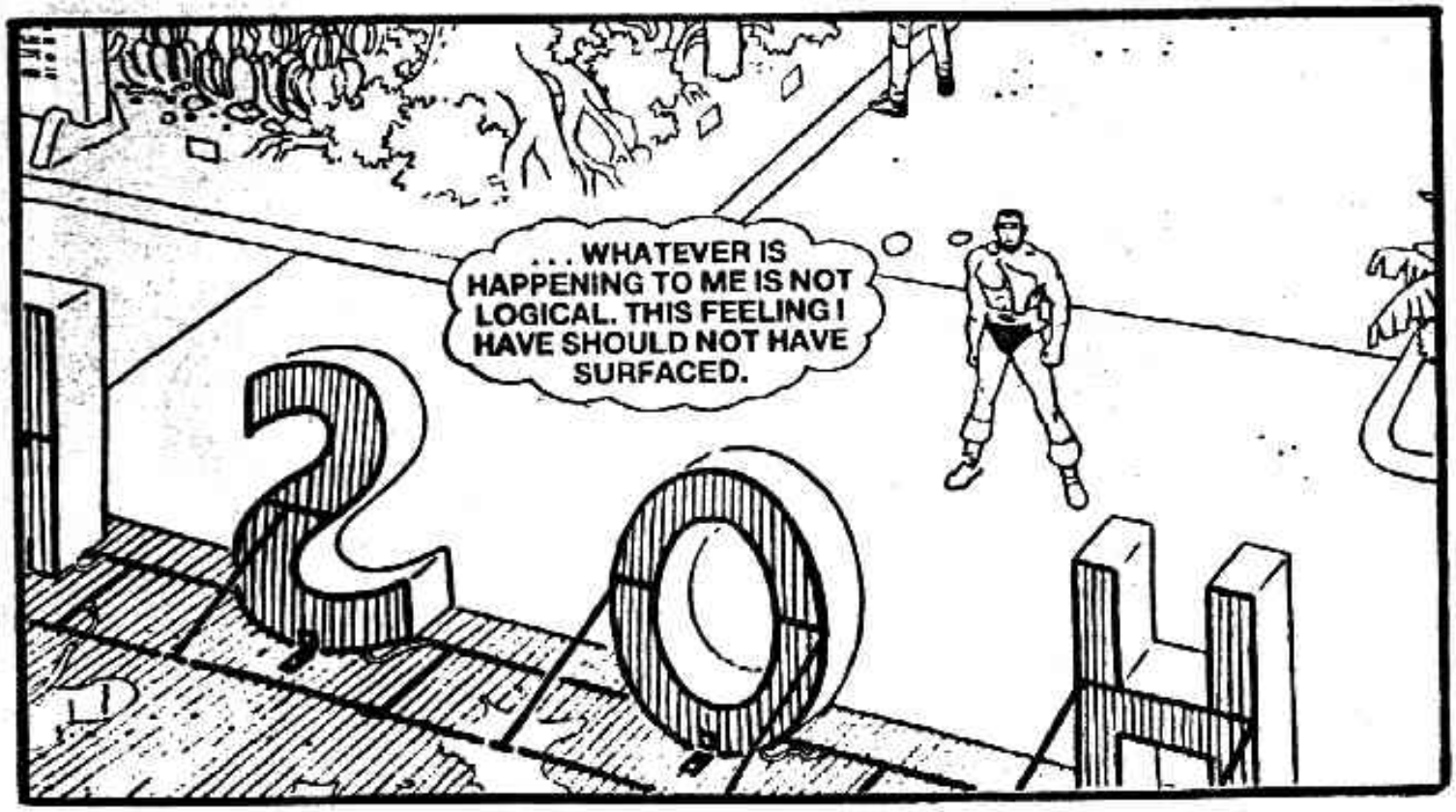

LAURA DIDN'T CARE ABOUT THE TECHNOLOGY — CARTER WAS *ALIVE!* THAT'S WHAT MATTERED TO HER.
HE'S NOW PART HUMAN, PART MACHINE — A MANDROID!
I WANT TO SEE HIM!

THERE WAS AN UNEASY SILENCE AND LAURA BEGAN TO SUSPECT THERE WAS SOMETHING THEY HADN'T TOLD HER.
IS THERE A PROBLEM?
THERE'S NO EASY WAY WE CAN PUT THIS, MISS HALVORSEN, SO I WILL HAVE TO BE BLUNT. YOU MUST PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE WORST.
THE DOCTOR'S WORDS HIT HER HARD. SHE GASPED FOR BREATH, AND TO HER DISGUST HER EYES STUNG WITH TEARS.
THE PART OF HIS BRAIN WE REPLACED CONTAINED HIS EMOTIONS. HE HAS NO HUMAN FEELINGS.
SHOCK GAVE WAY TO ANGER . . .
IS THAT IT, THEN? AM I JUST SUPPOSED TO FORGET HOW I FEEL ABOUT HIM?
I'M SORRY, MISS HALVORSEN.


. . . AN ANGER THAT WAS TO BURN FOR YEARS.

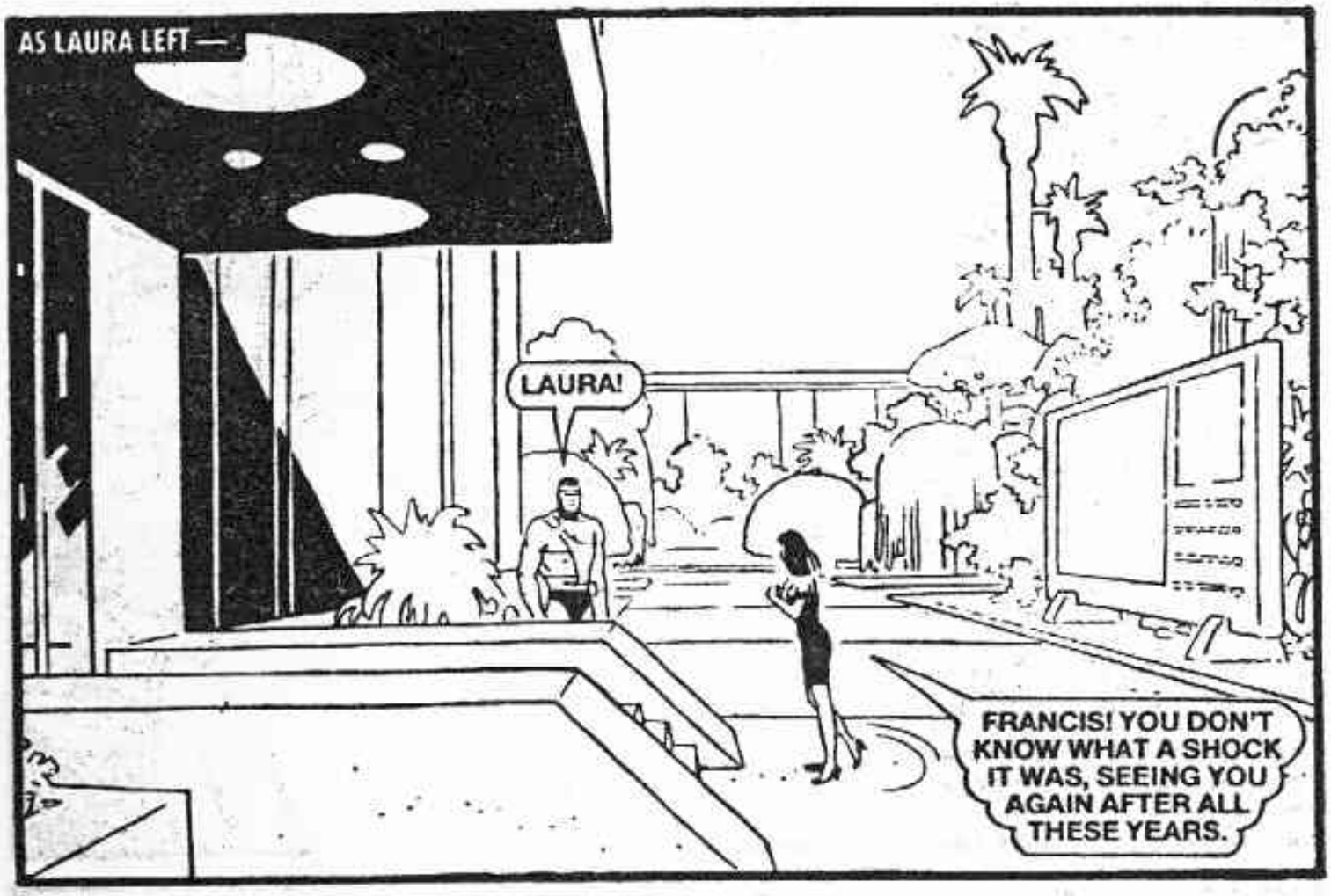

AND THAT'S WHY I'M A *MANDROID* . . . A CREATURE WITH NO EMOTIONS.


THE BIO-ENGINEERS WHO REBUILT HIS BRAIN AND BODY LEFT HIM WITH ONE EMOTION — THE DESIRE TO BRING CRIMINALS TO JUSTICE.
HOSPITAL


. . . WHATEVER IS HAPPENING TO ME IS NOT LOGICAL. THIS FEELING I HAVE SHOULD NOT HAVE SURFACED.

CARTER'S COLD LOGIC TOLD HIM TO FORGET THE PAST.
LAURA'S JUST ANOTHER VICTIM . . . A NAME ON A POLICE COMPUTER RECORD . . . A STATISTIC IN THE ENDLESS FIGHT AGAINST CRIME. THERE'S WORK TO BE DONE AND I'M WASTING VALUABLE TIME.
BUT SOMETHING NAGGED IN HIS MIND. A FEELING THAT SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN THERE.

INSIDE THE BUILDING—
YOU'VE GOT A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH — JUST A FEW MINOR CUTS AND BRUISES. BUT TAKE IT EASY . . . YOU ARE IN SLIGHT SHOCK!
I WILL. THANK YOU, DOCTOR.

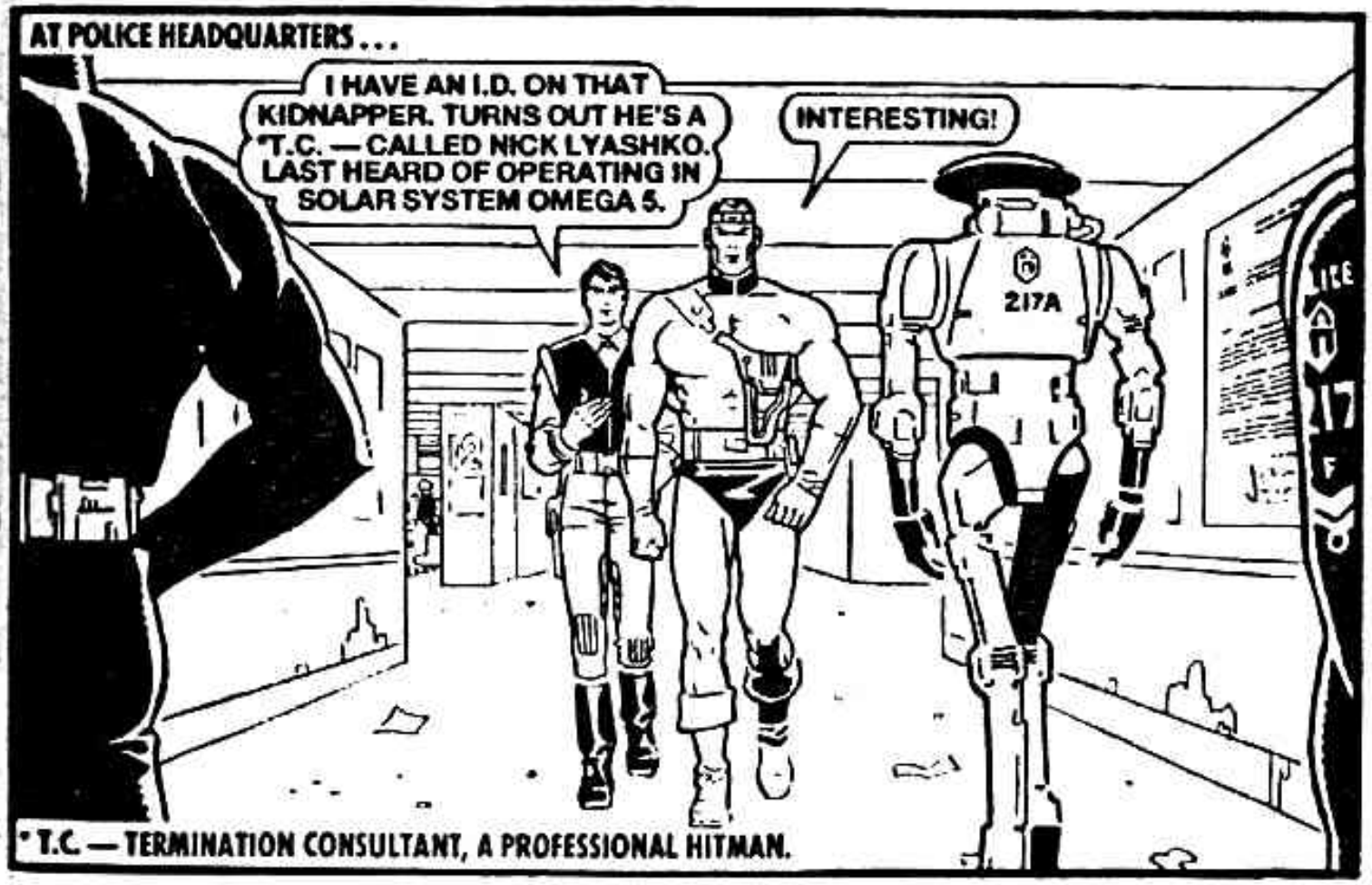

AS LAURA LEFT —
LAURA!
FRANCIS! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT A SHOCK IT WAS, SEEING YOU AGAIN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.

SEVEN YEARS! ARE YOU MARRIED?
NO!

THE SHOCK AND SURPRISE FADED — TO BE REPLACED BY THE ANGER WHICH HAD BEEN BURNING DEEP INSIDE HER . . .
WHY DIDN'T YOU CALL ME AFTER THE OPERATION? DIDN'T OUR RELATIONSHIP MEAN *ANYTHING* TO YOU?
NO!

I WASN'T . . . AM NOT THE PERSON YOU KNEW. I SHOULDN'T HAVE COME BACK . . . I'M SORRY.
SO AM I! GOODBYE, CARTER . . . AND THANKS FOR SAVING MY LIFE!

MEANWHILE, ON A PLANET 40 LIGHT YEARS AWAY . . .
I DON'T CARE WHAT WENT WRONG! I WANT THAT GIRL DEAD . . . HEAR ME? I WANT HER DEAD!


AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS . . .
I HAVE AN I.D. ON THAT KIDNAPPER. TURNS OUT HE'S A *T.C. — CALLED NICK LYASHKO. LAST HEARD OF OPERATING IN SOLAR SYSTEM OMEGA 5.
INTERESTING!
217A
* T.C. — TERMINATION CONSULTANT, A PROFESSIONAL HITMAN.

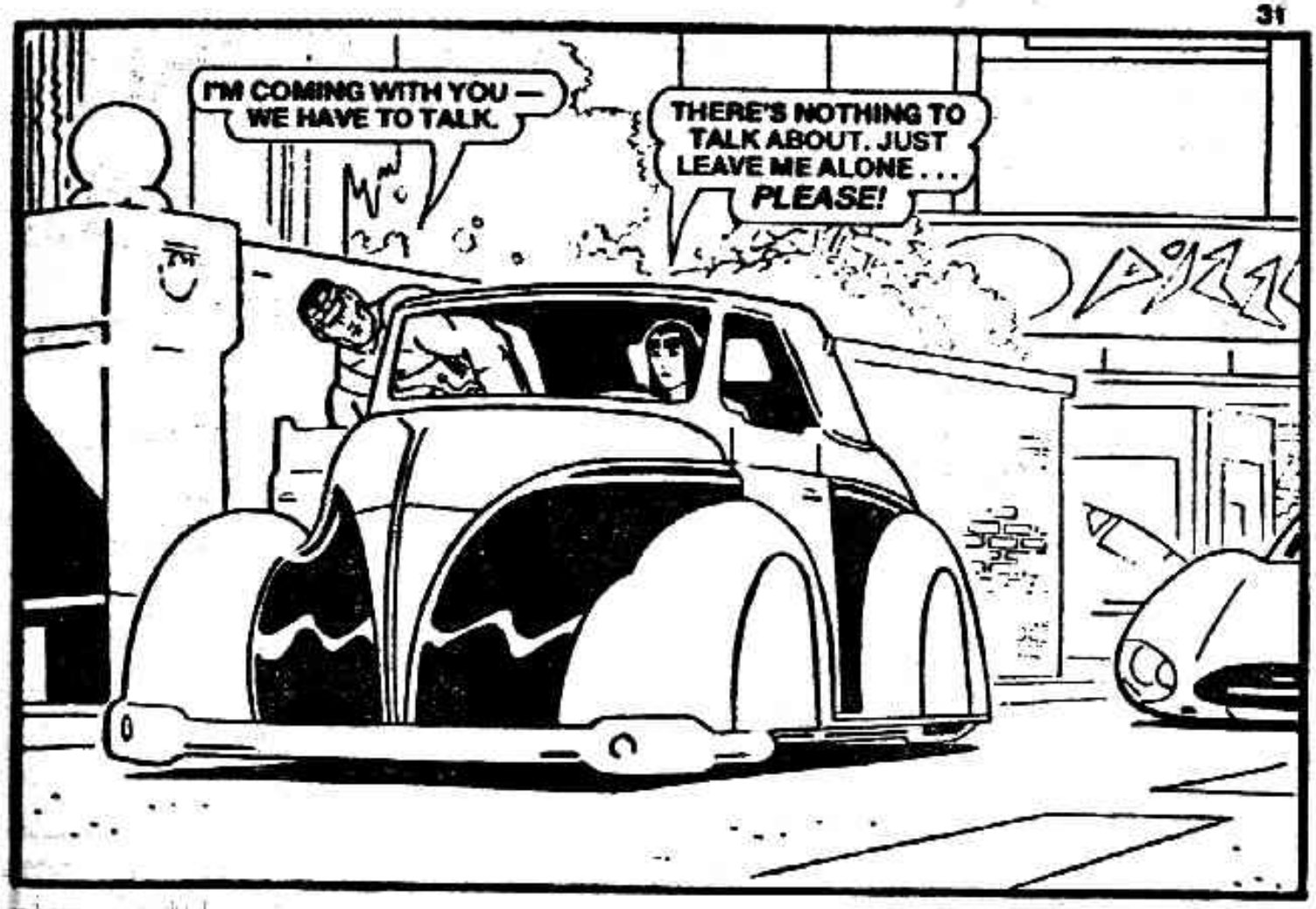
I FIGURE HE WAS HERE TO TERMINATE SOMEONE WHEN THE TWO OFFICERS SAW HIM, SO HE PANICKED AND GRABBED THE FEMALE AS A HOSTAGE.
POSSIBLE...
T.C.'S DON'T PANIC. IT'S MORE LIKELY THE FEMALE WAS HIS TERMINATION CONTRACT AND HE WAS DISTURBED BEFORE HE COULD KILL HER.
PERHAPS, SIR...
S.L.E.P.
SENIOR LAW ENFORCE DIVISION

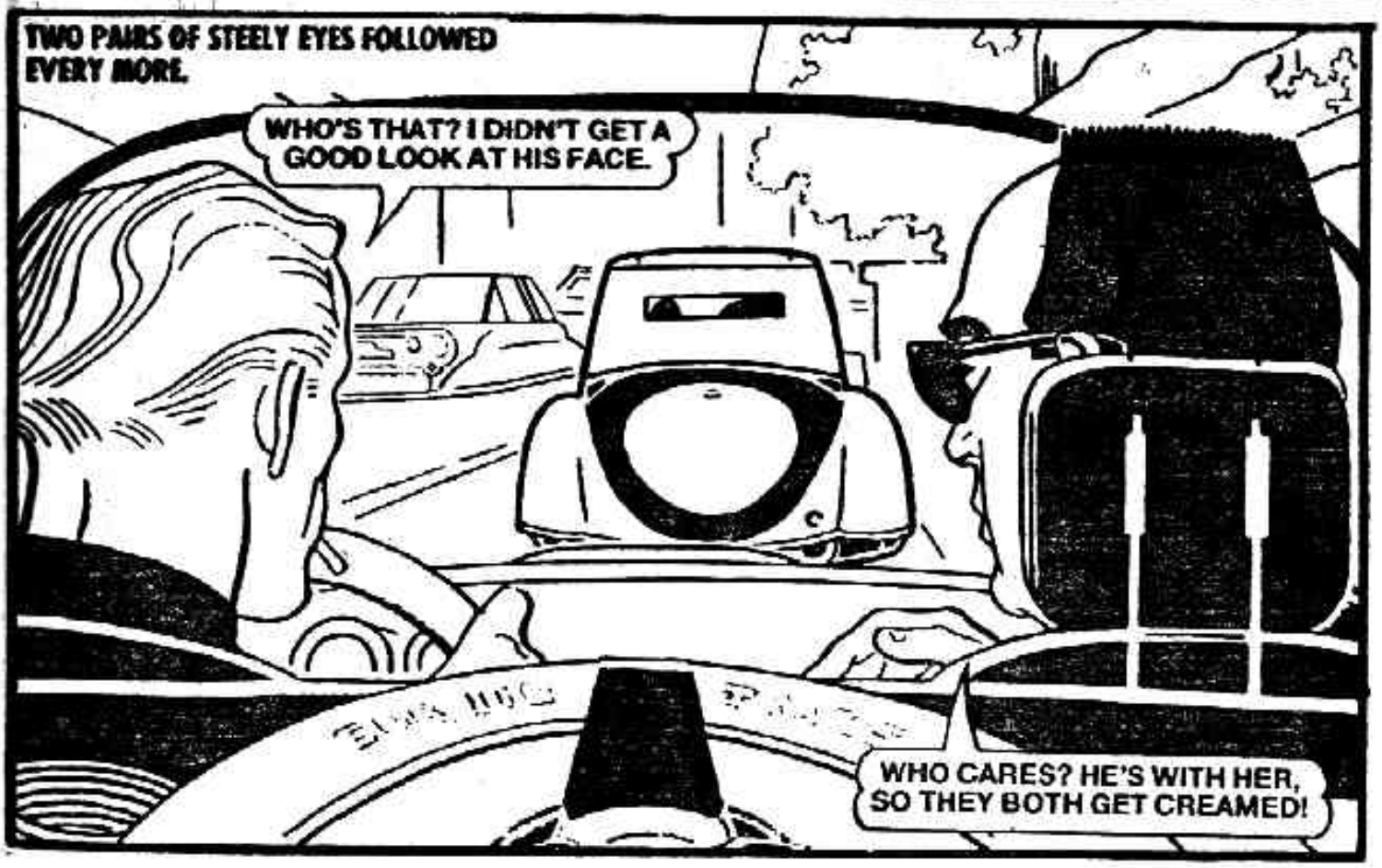
BUT WHO'D PAY TO HAVE HER KILLED — AND WHY?
THAT, NOLAN, IS WHAT I'M ABOUT TO FIND OUT.

CARTER FOUND OUT WHERE LAURA WAS STAYING . . .
LAURA!
HOTEL
I'M LEAVING TYROS, CARTER!

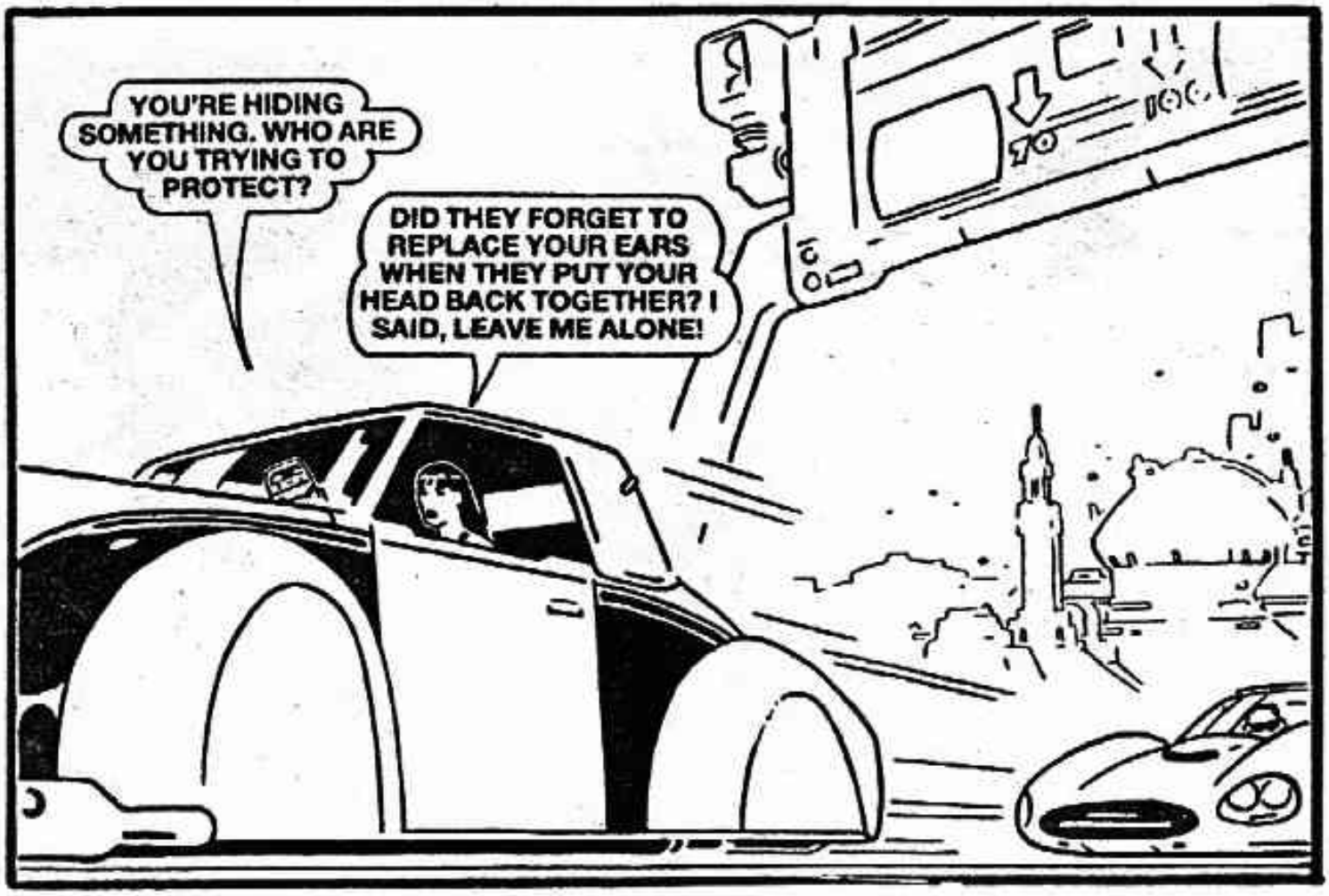
YOU CAN'T! YOU'RE A MATERIAL WITNESS AND I HAVEN'T FINISHED MY INVESTIGATION.
TOO BAD — I'M GOING!

HAD IT BEEN ANYONE ELSE CARTER WOULD HAVE ARRESTED THE WITNESS FOR OBSTRUCTING JUSTICE—
EITHER TAKE ME IN BY FORCE, OR LET ME GO!
SOMETHING DEEP INSIDE MADE CARTER HESITATE. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS THE RULE BOOK DIDN'T SEEM AS IMPORTANT ANY MORE.


I'M COMING WITH YOU — WE HAVE TO TALK.
THERE'S NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT. JUST LEAVE ME ALONE . . . PLEASE!

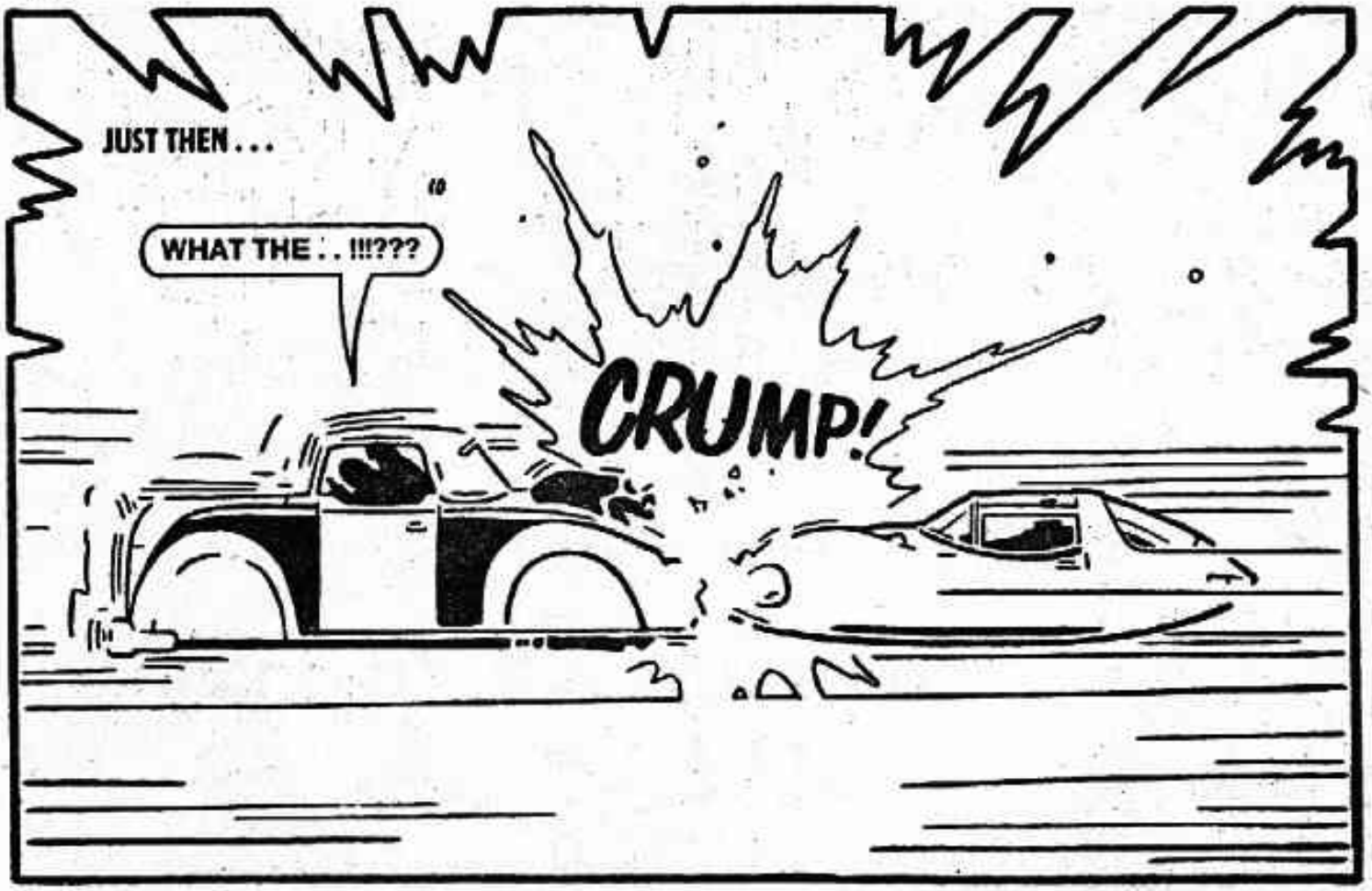

TWO PAIRS OF STEELY EYES FOLLOWED EVERY MORE.
WHO'S THAT? I DIDN'T GET A GOOD LOOK AT HIS FACE.
WHO CARES? HE'S WITH HER, SO THEY BOTH GET CREAMED!

THE MAN WHO KIDNAPPED YOU WAS A T.C. . . . A TERMINAL CONSULTANT. PERHAPS YOU'VE HEARD THE TERM.
LEAVE ME ALONE!


YOU'RE HIDING SOMETHING. WHO ARE YOU TRYING TO PROTECT?
DID THEY FORGET TO REPLACE YOUR EARS WHEN THEY PUT YOUR HEAD BACK TOGETHER? I SAID, LEAVE ME ALONE!

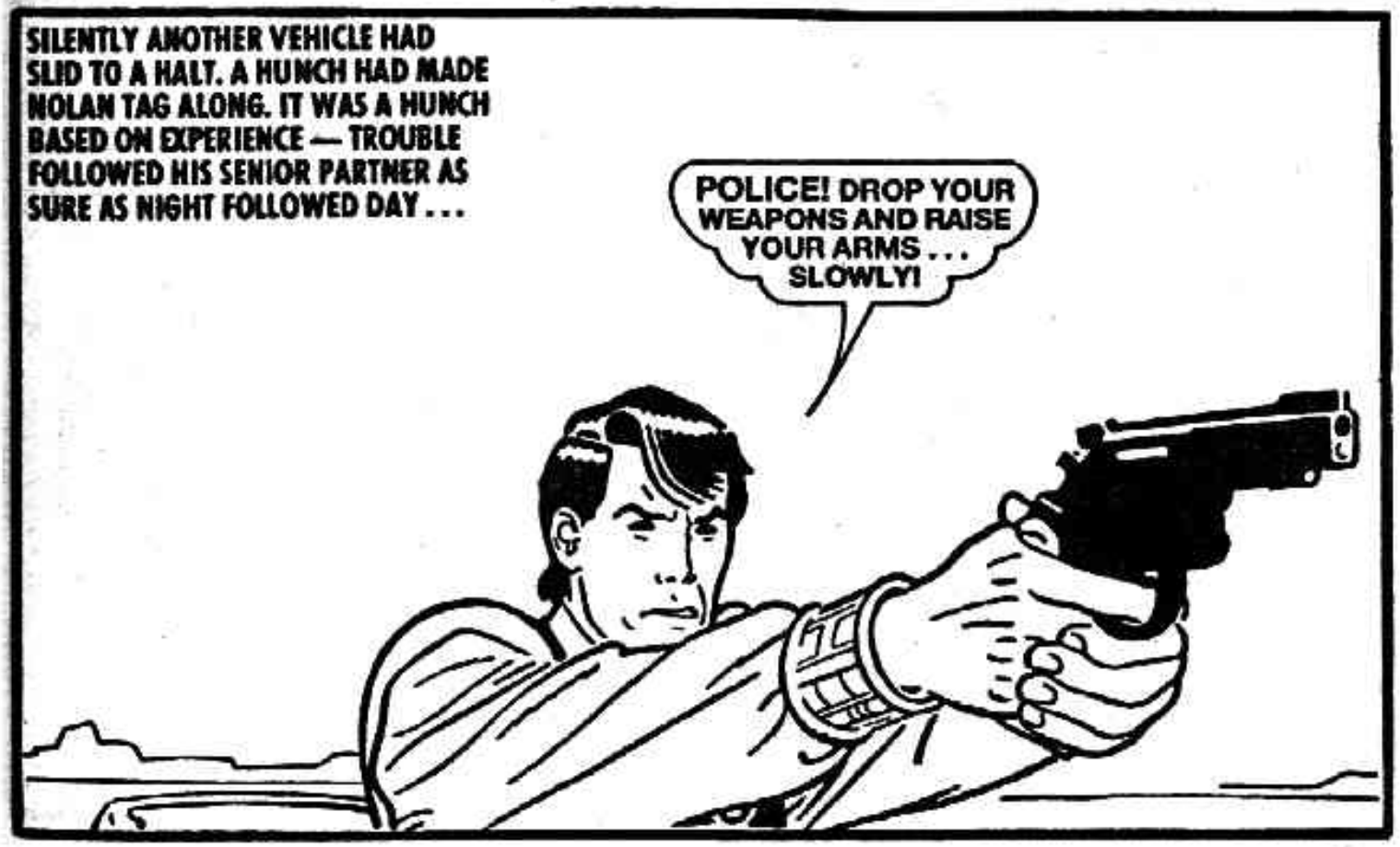
I'M ONLY DOING MY JOB.
SOME JOB!

DAMN YOU, CARTER! YOU ALMOST GOT KILLED THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU . . . FOR SEVEN YEARS I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT YOU, THE SHOOTING, EVERY LITTLE DETAIL. BIT BY BIT I FORGOT . . . NOW YOU'RE HERE AND IT ALL COMES BACK.

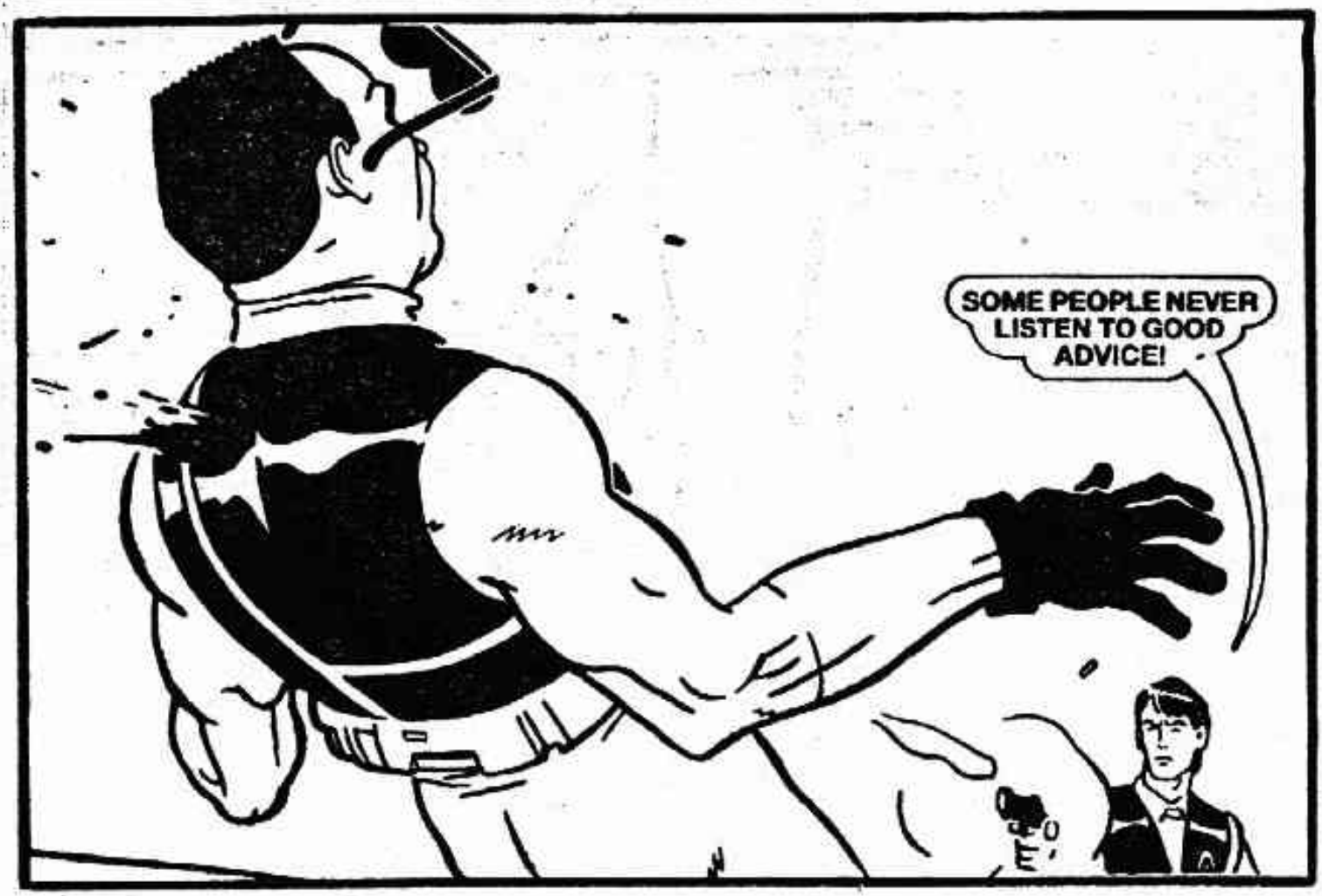

JUST THEN . . .
WHAT THE . . !!!???
CRUMP!

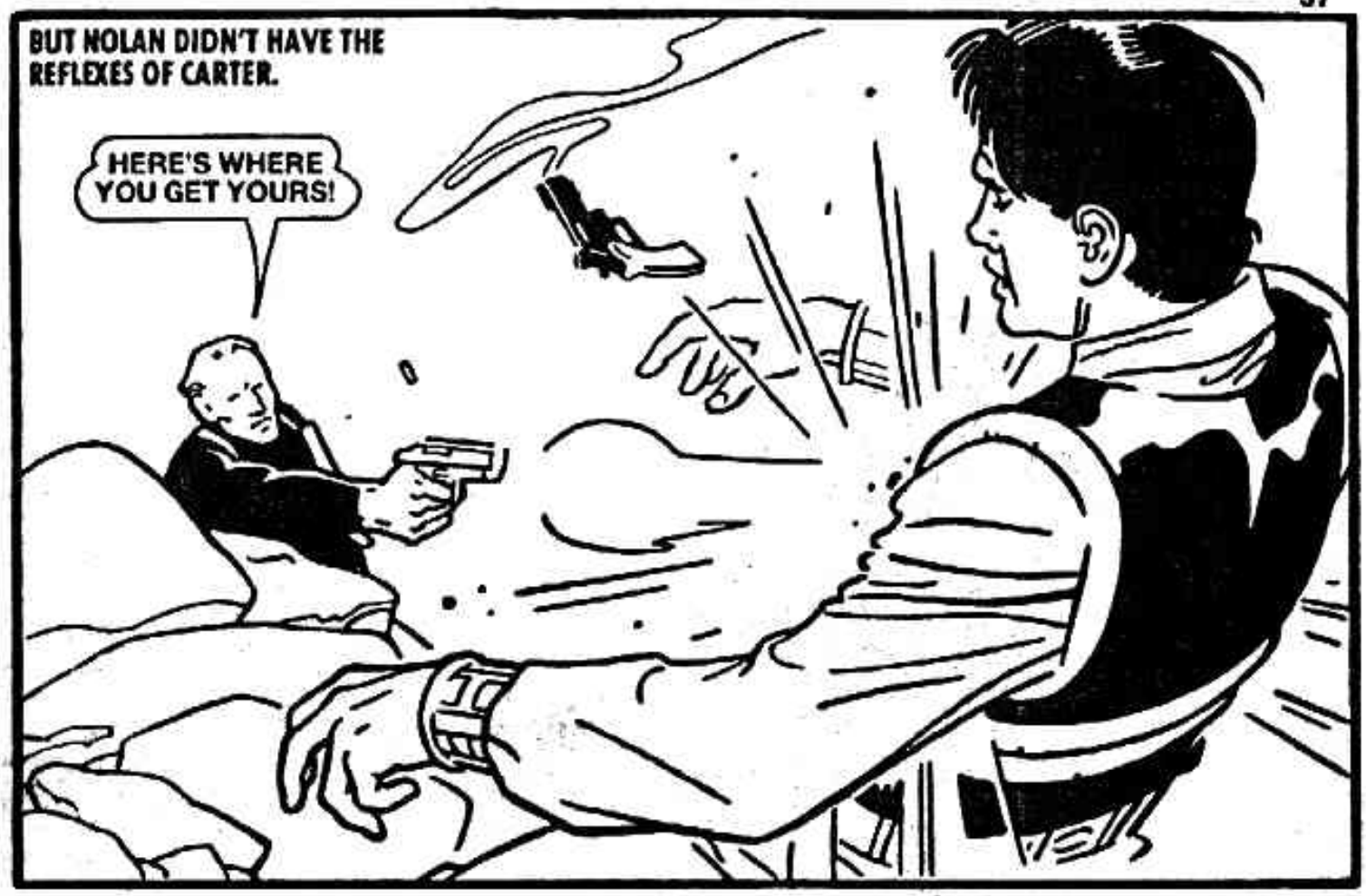
NOOOO!
NICE WORK! NOW WE CAN FINISH THEM OFF!

SET YOUR PHOTON BLASTER ON FULL POWER. I DON'T WANT ANY TRACE OF THEM OR THEIR LAND VEHICLE LEFT LYING ABOUT.
YOU GOT IT!


SILENTLY ANOTHER VEHICLE HAD SLID TO A HALT. A HUNCH HAD MADE NOLAN TAG ALONG. IT WAS A HUNCH BASED ON EXPERIENCE — TROUBLE FOLLOWED HIS SENIOR PARTNER AS SURE AS NIGHT FOLLOWED DAY . . .
POLICE! DROP YOUR WEAPONS AND RAISE YOUR ARMS . . . SLOWLY!

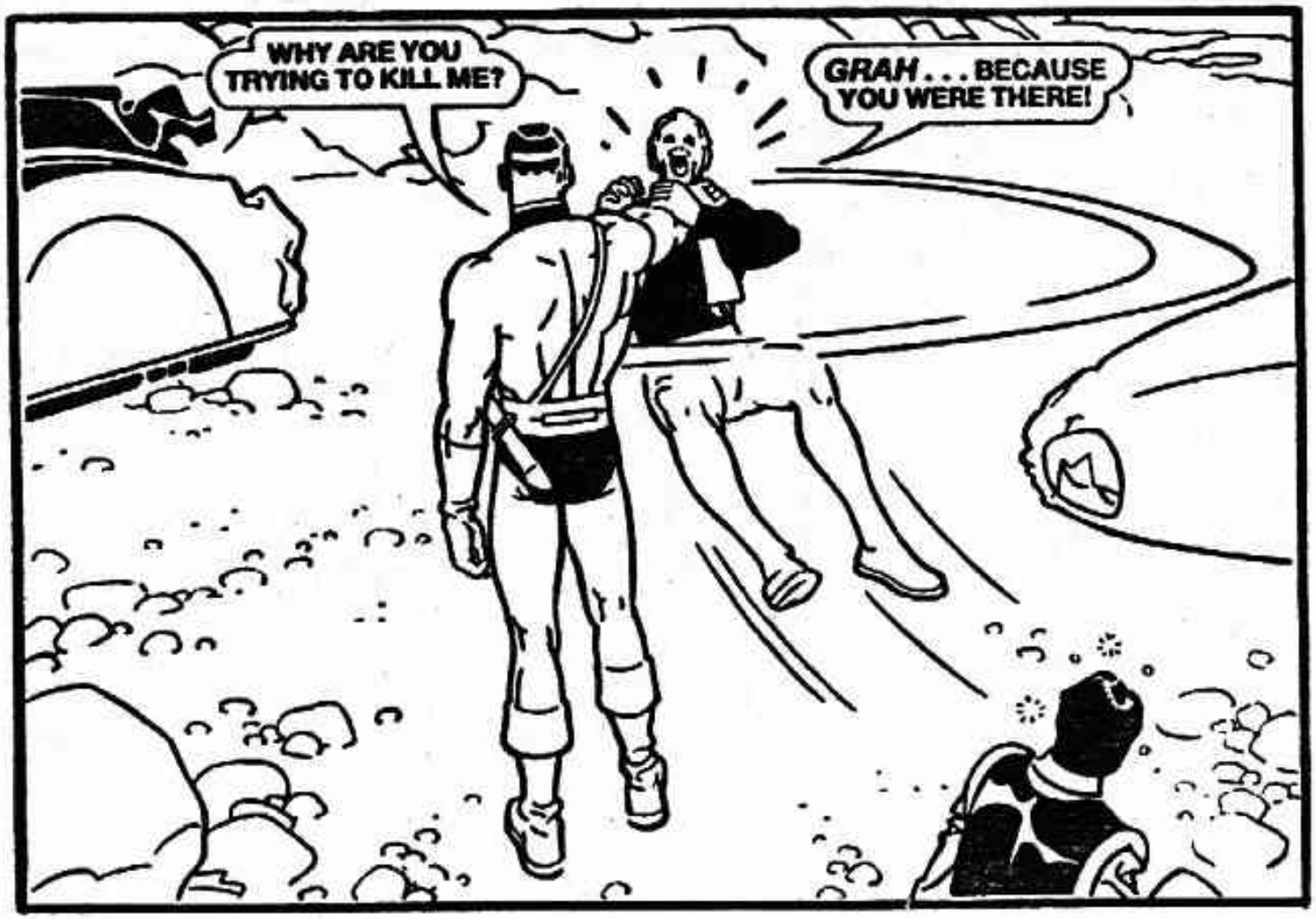
NO CHANCE! YOU'RE NOT DEALING WITH SOME CHEAP CRIMO HERE, COP!
DON'T TRY IT!


SOME PEOPLE NEVER LISTEN TO GOOD ADVICE!


BUT NOLAN DIDN'T HAVE THE REFLEXES OF CARTER.
HERE'S WHERE YOU GET YOURS!

ALTHOUGH NOLAN WAS WEARING POLICE ISSUE TOTAL BODY ARMOUR UNDER HIS SUIT, THE SHOCK FROM A FULL BLAST PHOTON BOLT HAD LEFT HIM DAZED.
THIS IS WHERE I VAPORISE YOUR HEAD, COP — SO SAY GOODBYE TO THE UNIVERSE!

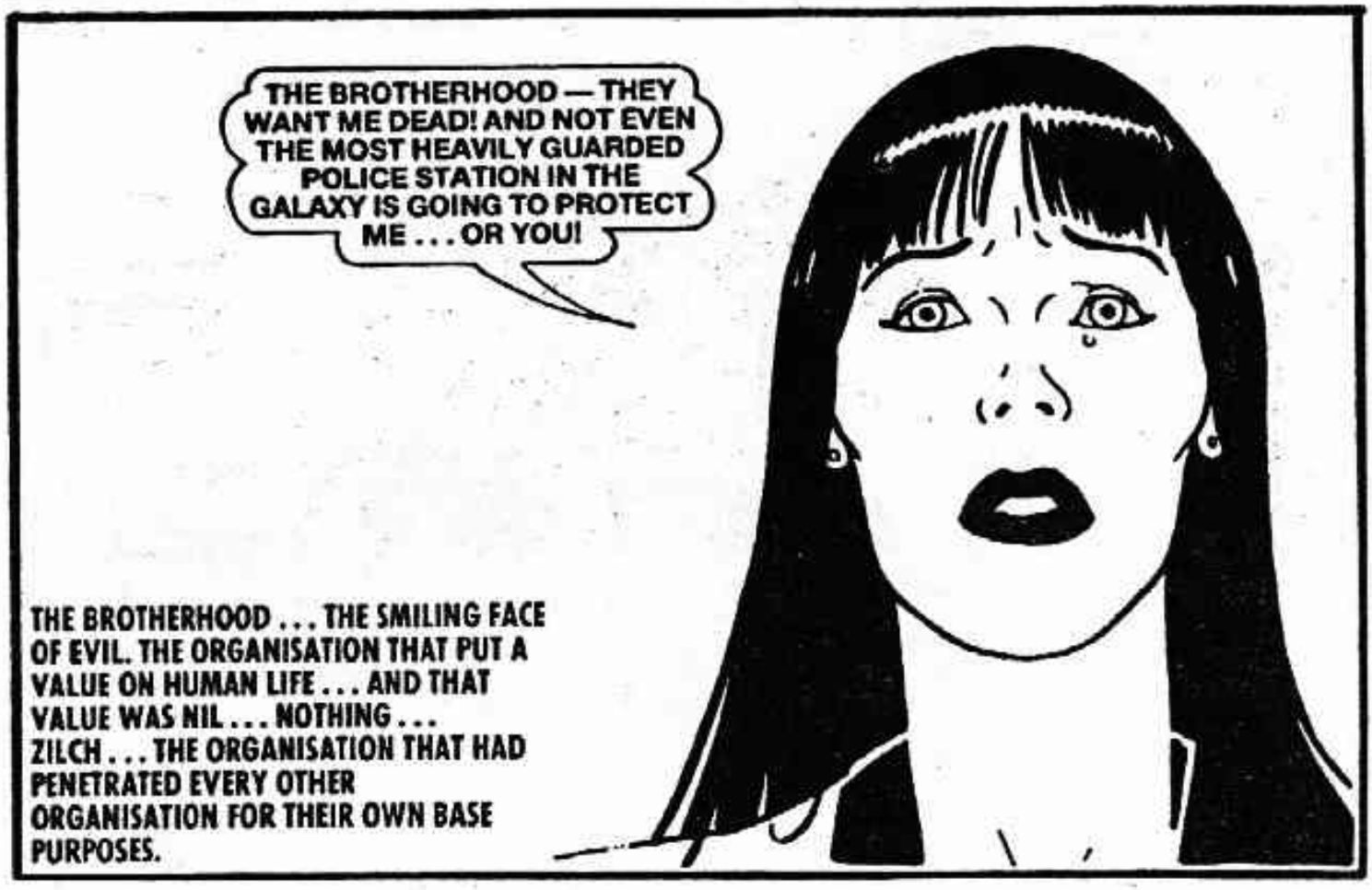
BUT THE TRIGGER WAS NEVER PULLED—
OH, NO IT ISN'T! I WANT A WORD WITH YOU, SPACESCUM!
HUH?


WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO KILL ME?
GRAH . . . BECAUSE YOU WERE THERE!

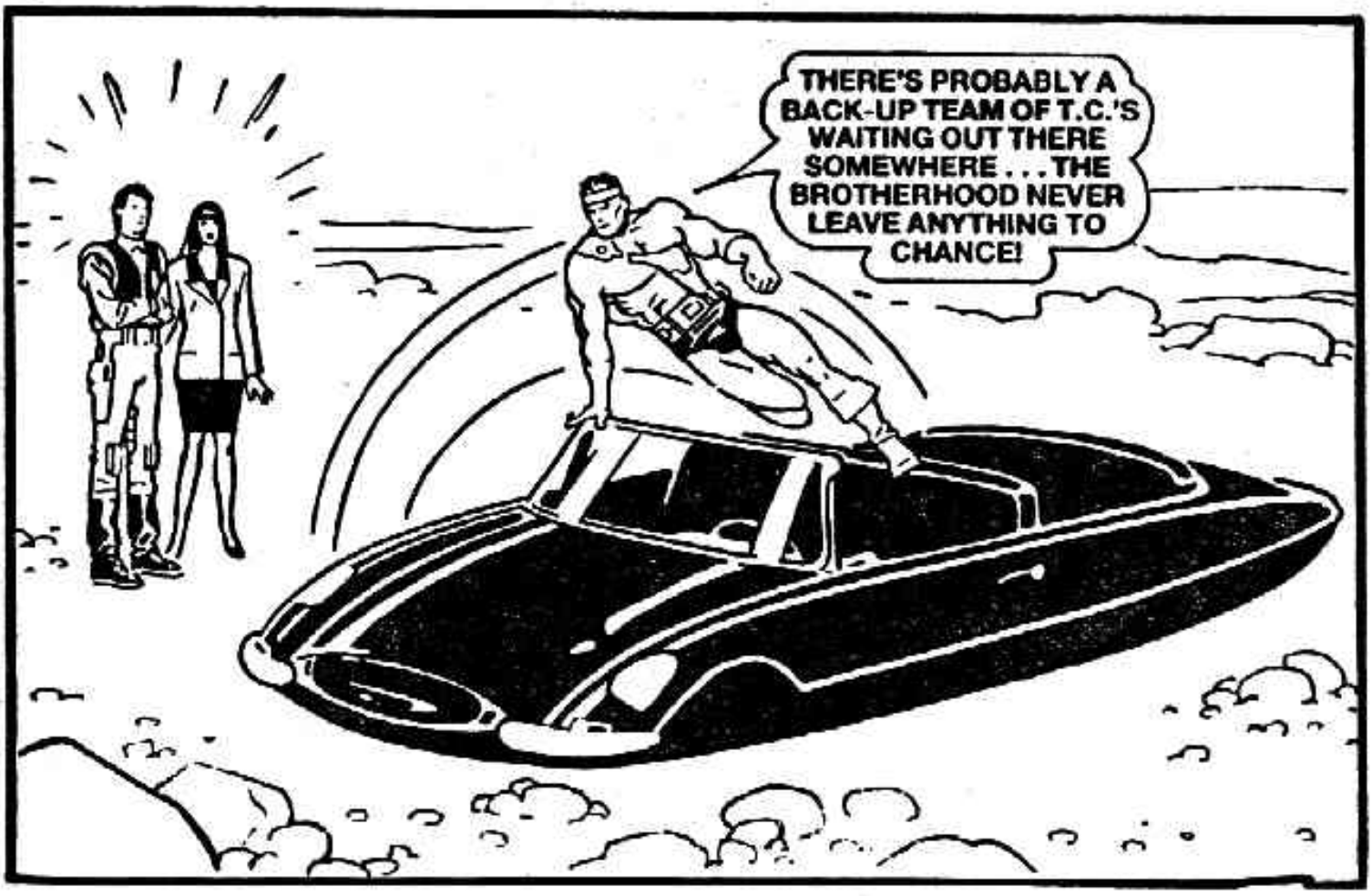
SO IT WAS REALLY LAURA THEY WERE AFTER!
HE ISN'T GOING TO TALK . . . T.C.'S NEVER DO!

I'LL CALL FOR A MEDI-ANDROID! HOW'S THE LADY?
A BIT SHAKEN AND BRUISED — BUT STILL ALIVE, THANKS TO YOU!
WE'RE GOING TO SORT THIS OUT DOWN AT HEADQUARTERS.

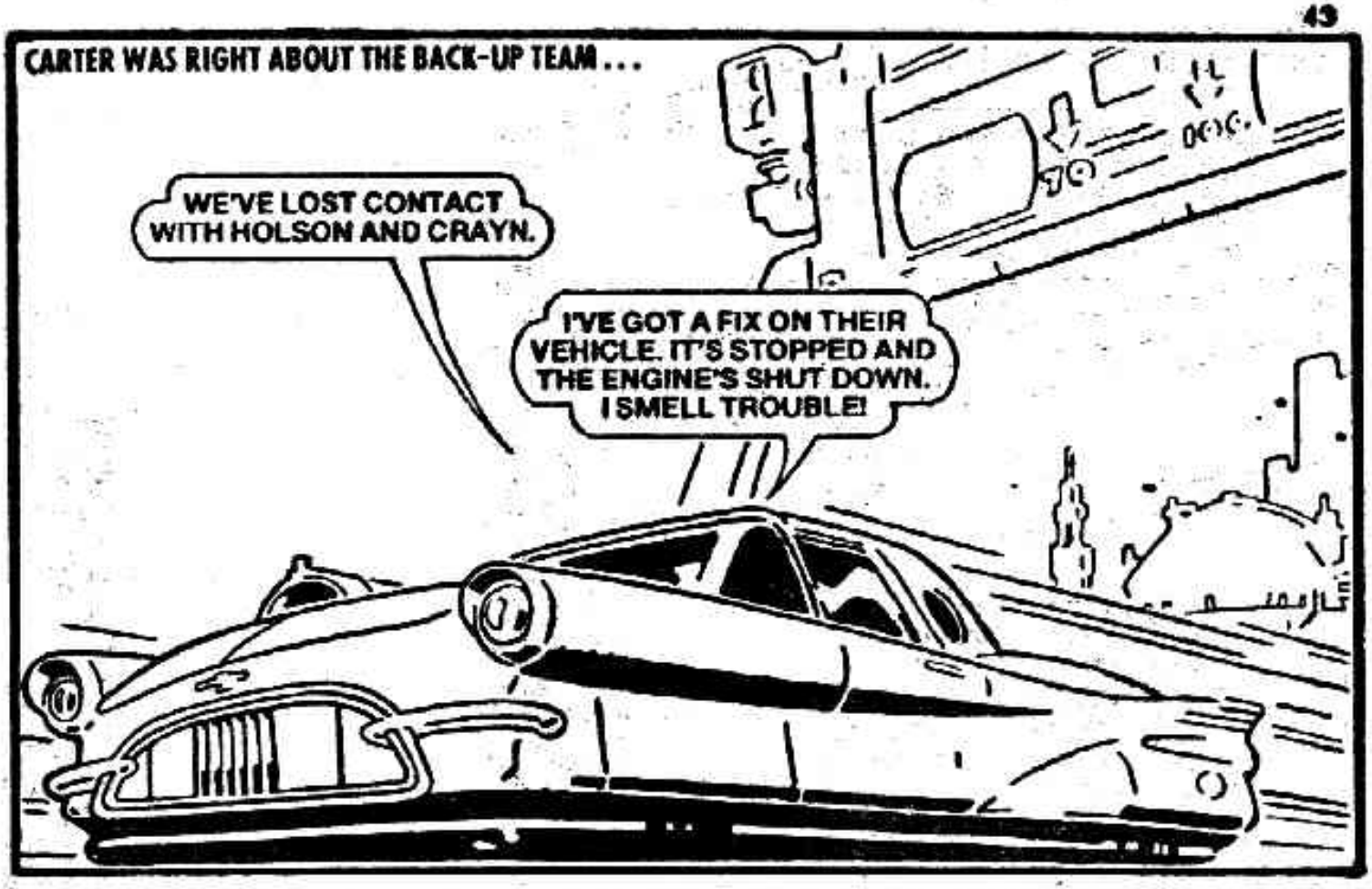
NO! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! WE'RE NOT SAFE FROM THEM, EVEN THERE!
SAFE FROM WHO? COME ON, LAURA . . . TALK! AND THIS TIME I WANT THE TRUTH!

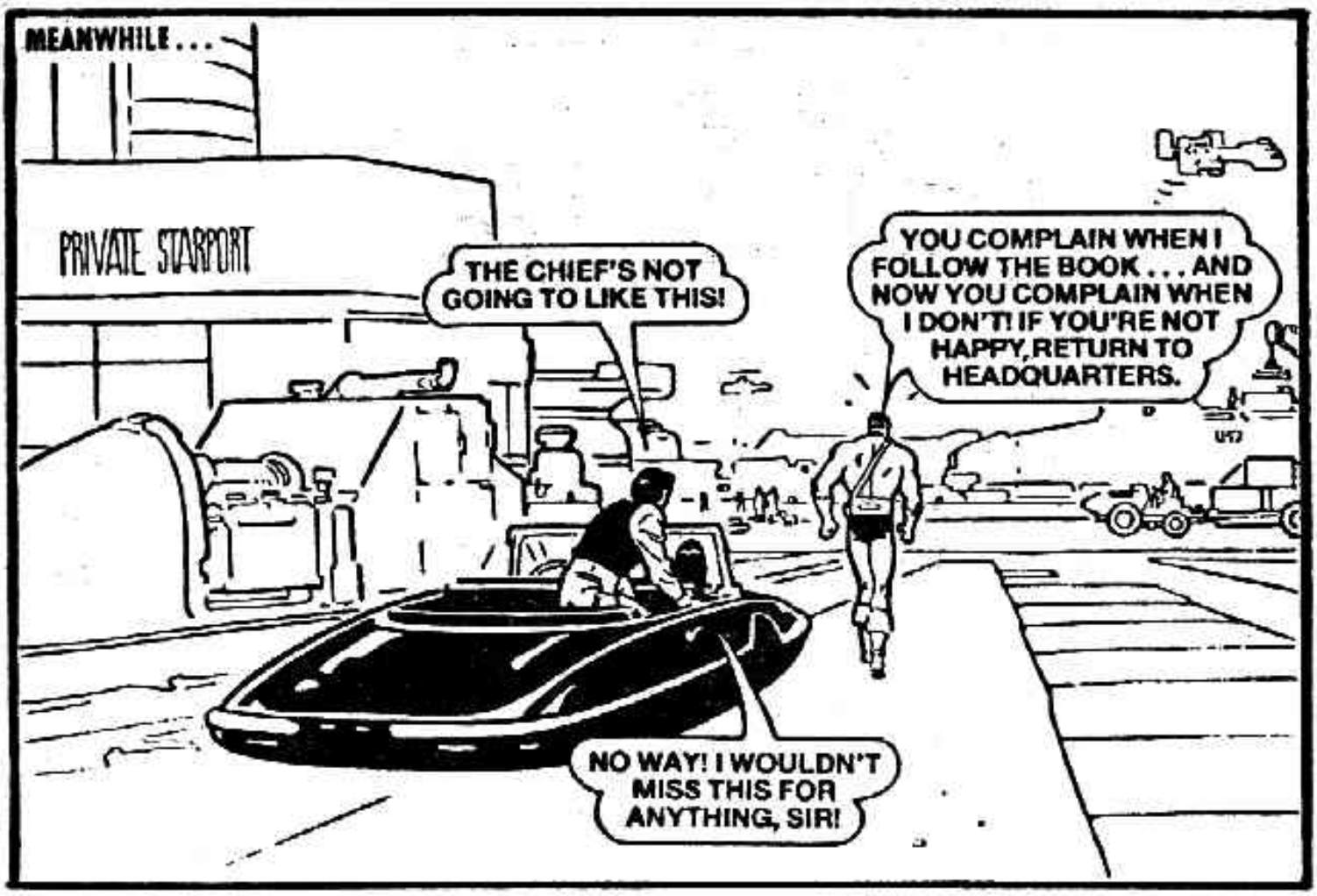

THE BROTHERHOOD — THEY WANT ME DEAD! AND NOT EVEN THE MOST HEAVILY GUARDED POLICE STATION IN THE GALAXY IS GOING TO PROTECT ME . . . OR YOU!
THE BROTHERHOOD . . . THE SMILING FACE OF EVIL. THE ORGANISATION THAT PUT A VALUE ON HUMAN LIFE . . . AND THAT VALUE WAS NIL . . . NOTHING . . . ZILCH . . . THE ORGANISATION THAT HAD PENETRATED EVERY OTHER ORGANISATION FOR THEIR OWN BASE PURPOSES.

CARTER HESITATED, UNSURE OF HIS NEXT MOVE. THE ELECTRONIC PART OF HIS BRAIN TOLD HIM TO FOLLOW PROCEDURE, BUT THE HUMAN PART HELD AN EMOTION HE NEVER THOUGHT HE'D FEEL AGAIN . . .
WE MUST GO BY THE BOOK.
WHY? YOU'VE NEVER USED IT BEFORE, SIR! WE'RE ON OUR OWN!

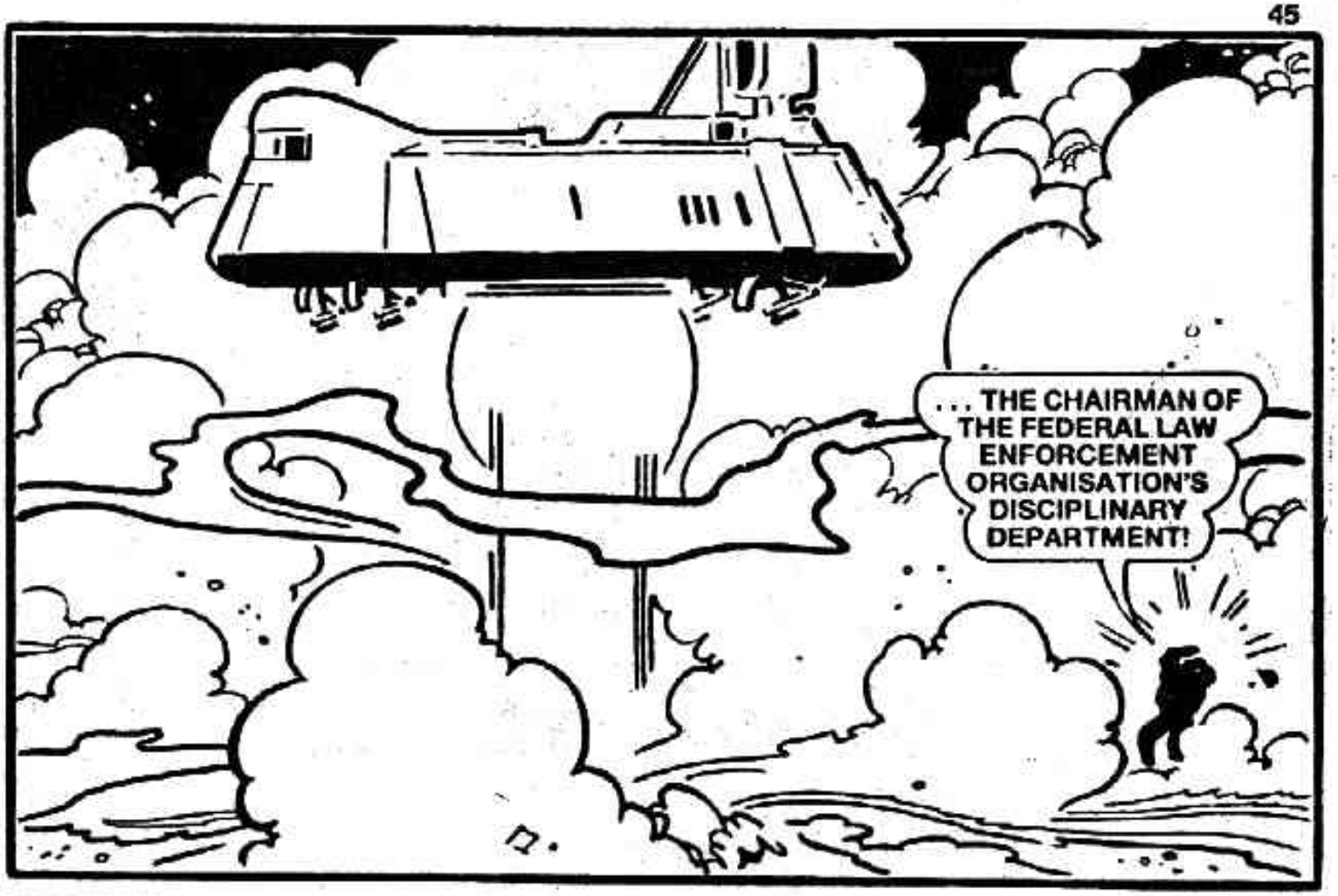

THERE'S PROBABLY A BACK-UP TEAM OF T.C.'S WAITING OUT THERE SOMEWHERE . . . THE BROTHERHOOD NEVER LEAVE ANYTHING TO CHANCE!

CARTER HAD MADE HIS MIND UP—
THERE'S A PRIVATE SPACEPORT 15 KILOCRONS AWAY. WE'LL BORROW A STARCRUISER AND GO ON THE OFFENSIVE.
BORROW, SIR? WE DON'T HAVE DEPARTMENTAL CLEARANCE.
OKAY . . . I'LL SIGN A CHIT!


CARTER WAS RIGHT ABOUT THE BACK-UP TEAM . . .
WE'VE LOST CONTACT WITH HOLSON AND CRAYN.
I'VE GOT A FIX ON THEIR VEHICLE. IT'S STOPPED AND THE ENGINE'S SHUT DOWN. I SMELL TROUBLE!

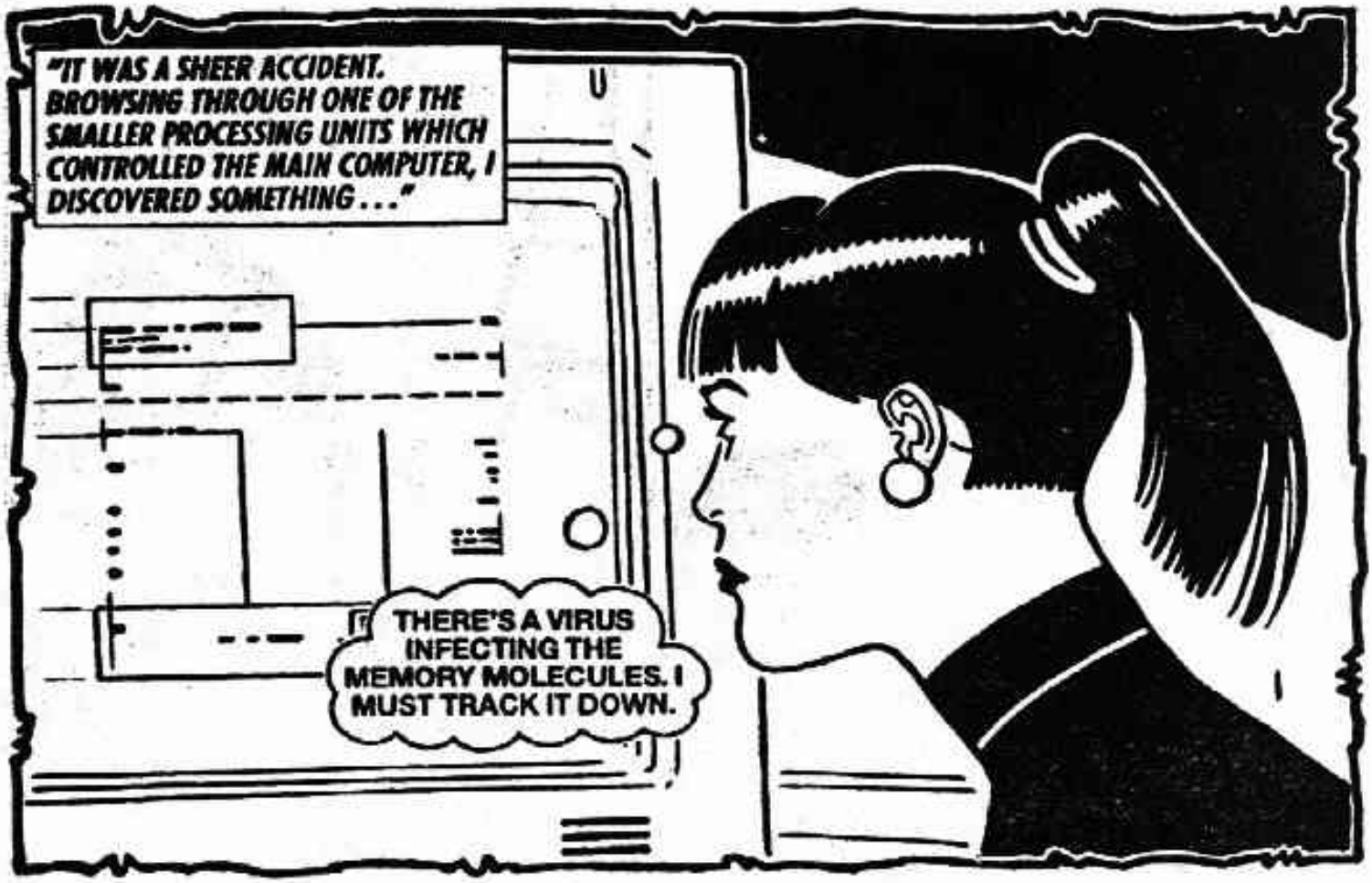

MEANWHILE . . .
PRIVATE STARPORT
THE CHIEF'S NOT GOING TO LIKE THIS!
YOU COMPLAIN WHEN I FOLLOW THE BOOK . . . AND NOW YOU COMPLAIN WHEN I DON'T! IF YOU'RE NOT HAPPY, RETURN TO HEADQUARTERS.
NO WAY! I WOULDN'T MISS THIS FOR ANYTHING, SIR!

CAN I HELP YOU?
THIS IS OFFICIAL POLICE BUSINESS!
HEY! YOU CAN'T GO IN THERE! THAT STARCRUISER BELONGS TO . . .


. . . THE CHAIRMAN OF THE FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ORGANISATION'S DISCIPLINARY DEPARTMENT!

AFTER PLACING THE CRAFT ON AUTONAV, CARTER TURNED TO LAURA—
IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU TOLD US WHY THE BROTHERHOOD WANT YOU TERMINATED.
BECAUSE OF WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THEM.

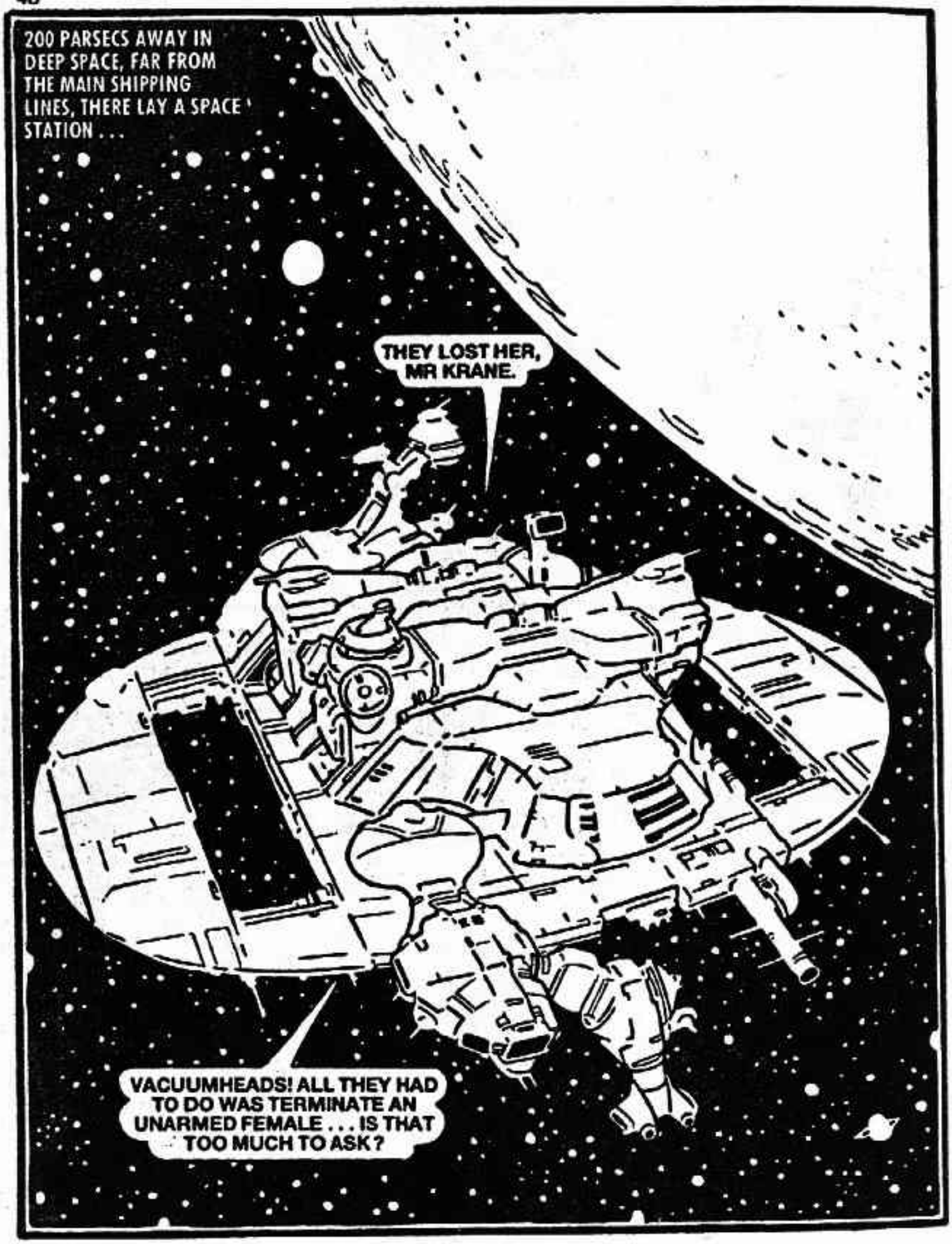
"I WAS WORKING AS A COMPUTER PROGRAMMER AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE FEDERAL BANKING SYSTEM ON SPARUS . . ."
HELLO? THAT'S ODD!


"IT WAS A SHEER ACCIDENT. BROWSING THROUGH ONE OF THE SMALLER PROCESSING UNITS WHICH CONTROLLED THE MAIN COMPUTER, I DISCOVERED SOMETHING . . ."
THERE'S A VIRUS INFECTING THE MEMORY MOLECULES. I MUST TRACK IT DOWN.

THE VIRUS WAS THERE TO SYPHON CREDITS FROM THE BANK AND TRANSFER THEM TO THE BROTHERHOOD. FINDING IT WAS A BILLION TO ONE CHANCE. UNFORTUNATELY THE VIRUS HAD A BOOBY TRAP . . .
FINDING IT TRIGGERED A TRACER AND ALERTED THE PEOPLE WHO PLACED IT.

THE TRACER WORKS BOTH WAYS. DID YOU TRACK IT TO THE SOURCE?
YES!
GOOD! FEED THE DATA INTO THE NAVIGATION COMPUTER, BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE WE'RE GOING NEXT.

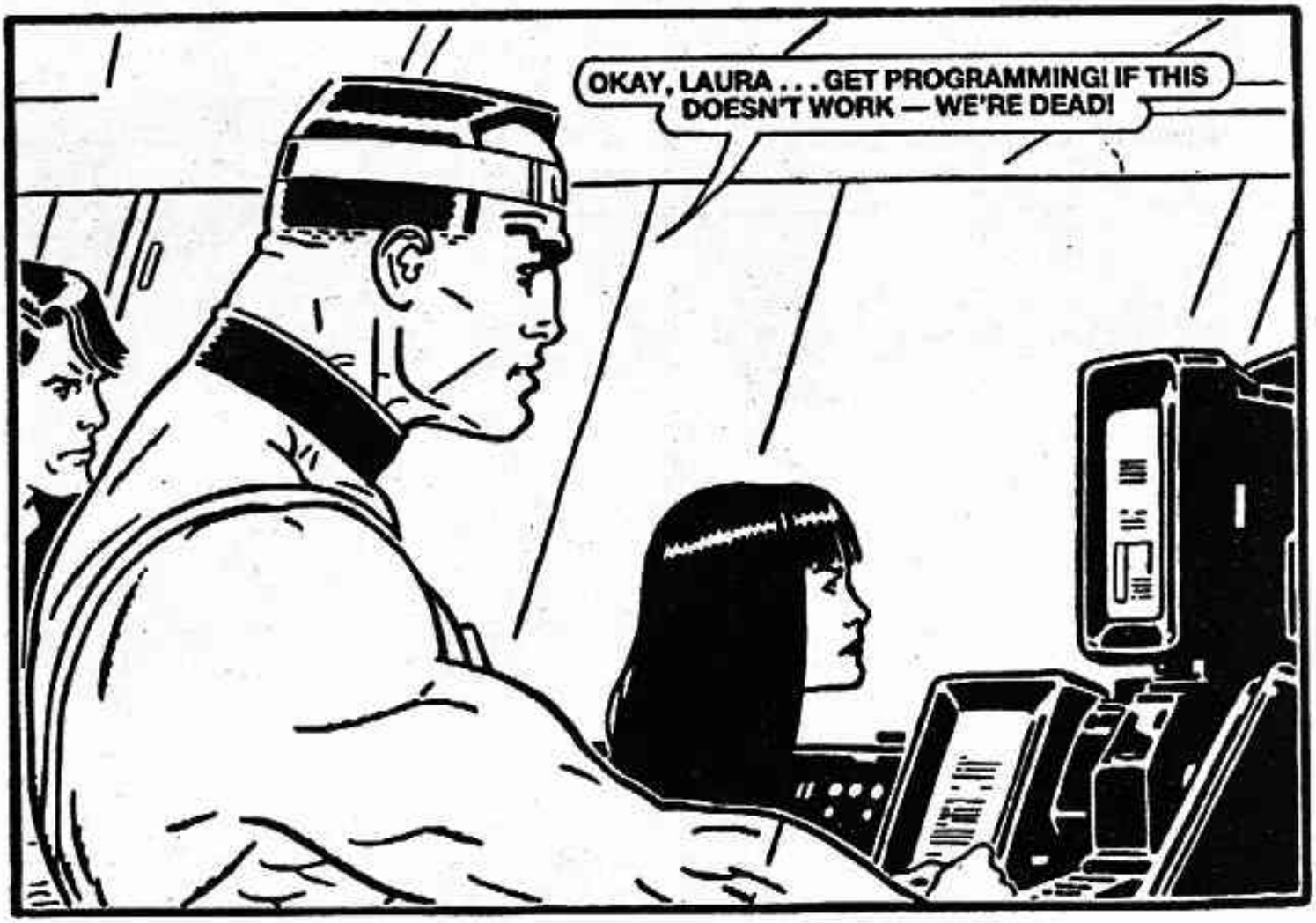
ARE YOU SUGGESTING WE ATTACK THE BROTHERHOOD'S MAIN BASE IN AN UNARMED STARCRUISER, SIR?
YES, MR NOLAN . . . I AM INDEED!


200 PARSECS AWAY IN DEEP SPACE, FAR FROM THE MAIN SHIPPING LINES, THERE LAY A SPACE STATION . . .
THEY LOST HER, MR KRANE.
VACUUMHEADS! ALL THEY HAD TO DO WAS TERMINATE AN UNARMED FEMALE . . . IS THAT TOO MUCH TO ASK?

THIS WAS NO ORDINARY STATION . . . THIS WAS THE NERVE CENTRE OF THE BROTHERHOOD'S SCHEME TO DEFRAUD THE FEDERATION BANKING SYSTEM . . .
CARTER WAS WITH THEM.
SHE SHOULD HAVE BEEN TERMINATED LONG BEFORE THAT MANDROID POKED HIS NOSE IN. OUR SUPERIORS ARE DISPLEASED — AND THAT COULD PROVE FATAL FOR US!

THAT WOMAN WILL HAVE TOLD CARTER ALL SHE KNOWS. IF SO, THEY'LL BE ON THEIR WAY HERE. LET'S PREPARE AN APPROPRIATE WELCOME.

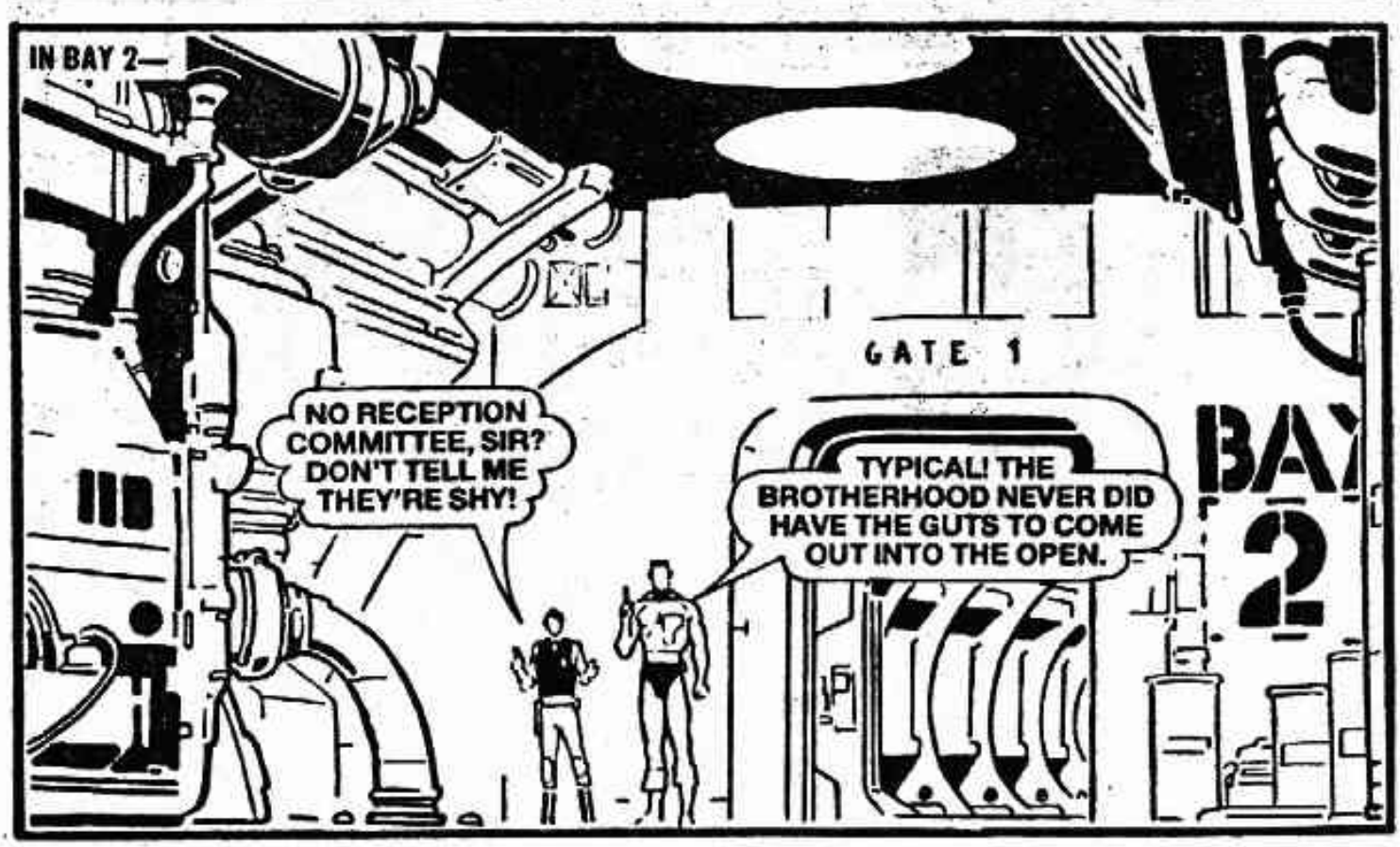
THEY DIDN'T HAVE LONG TO WAIT—
I HAVE A SHIP APPROACHING ON OUR SCANNERS! THE FEDERAL REGISTER SAYS IT BELONGS TO THE LAW ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT!
LOCK ON AND DESTROY! IT MUST BE THAT MANDROID!


OKAY, LAURA . . . GET PROGRAMMING! IF THIS DOESN'T WORK — WE'RE DEAD!

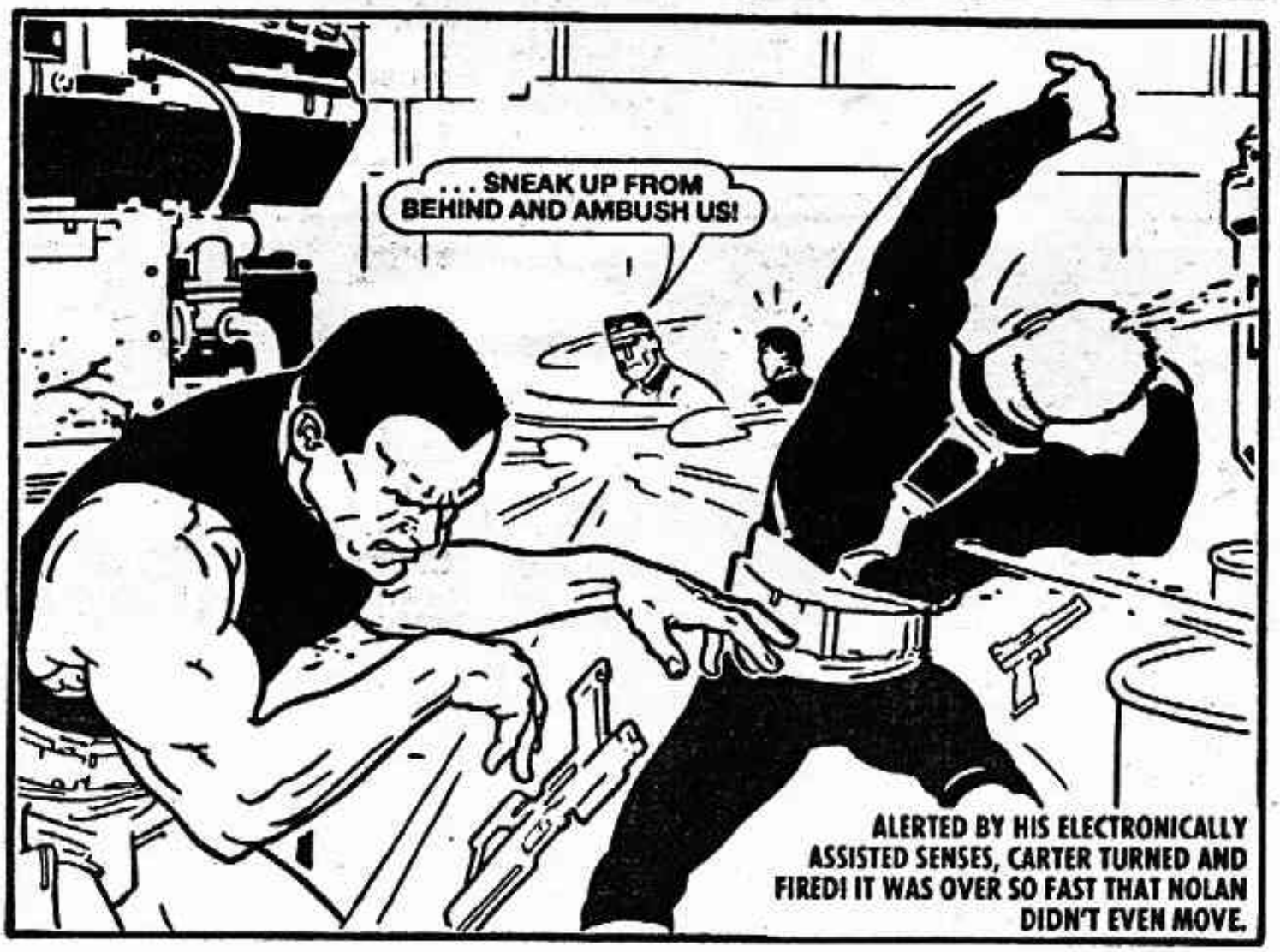
OUR WEAPONS ARE NOT RESPONDING, MR KRANE!
THEN USE THE BACK-UP SYSTEM . . . AND MAKE IT FAST!

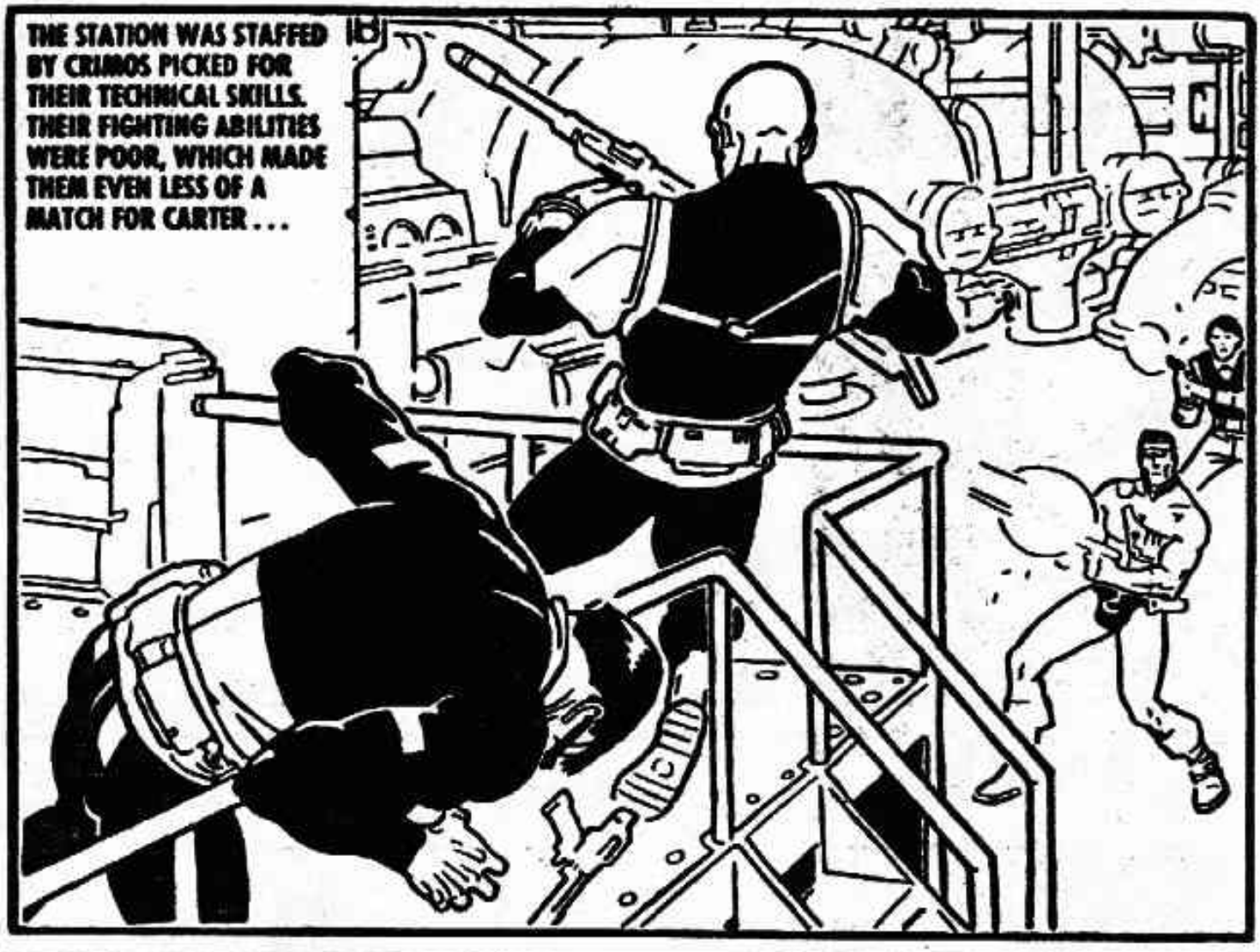
IT'S NO GOOD! ALL OUR DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS ARE DOWN . . . WE'RE WIDE OPEN!
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE . . . UNLESS . . . THAT DAMN WOMAN!

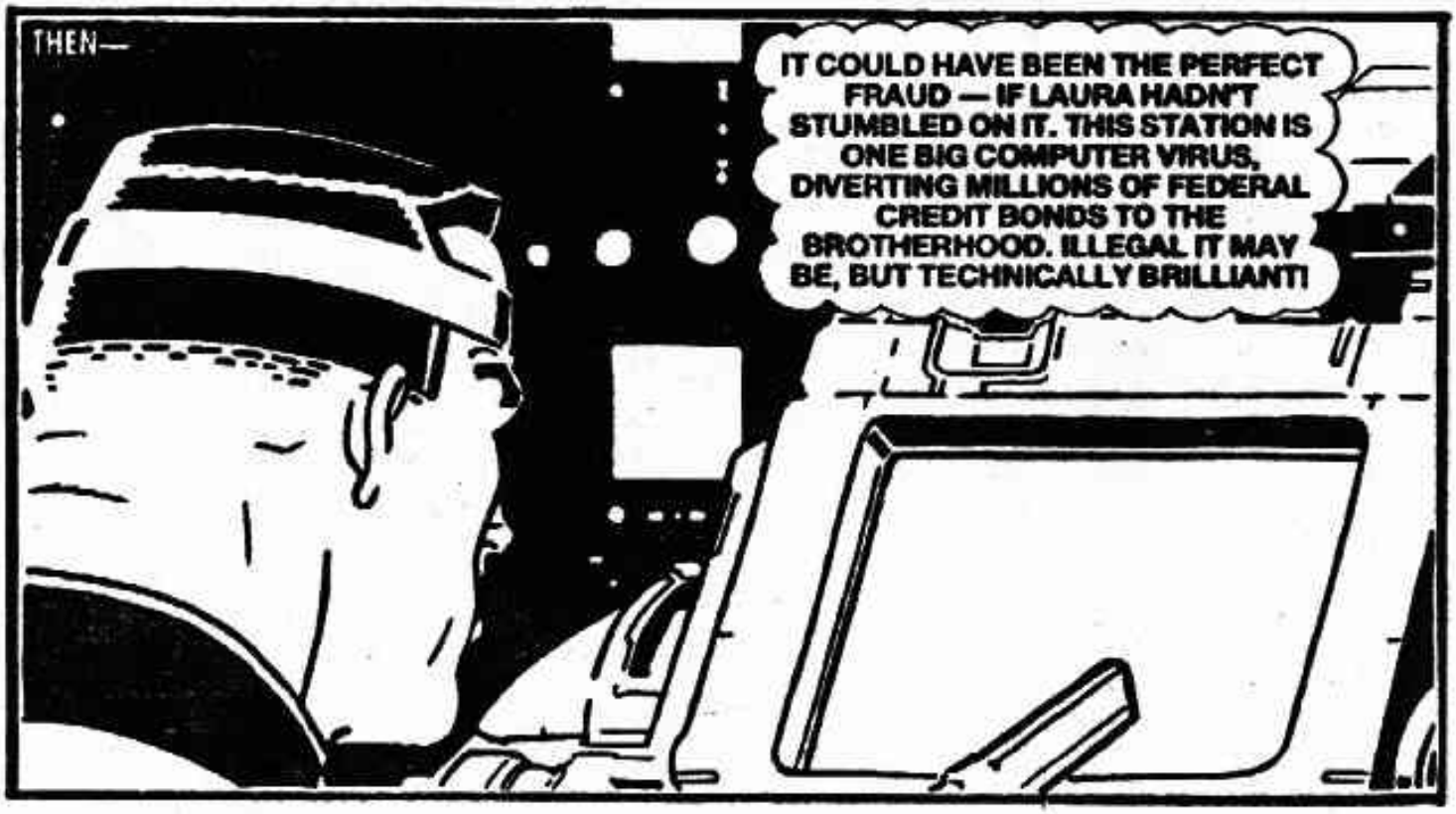
SHIP NOW DOCKING AT BAY 2.
SHE MUST HAVE TRACKED US THROUGH THE COMPUTER AND CLOSED DOWN OUR DEFENCES! THIS STATION IS NOTHING BUT A VAST COMPUTER . . . AND SHE'S ONE OF THE BEST PROGRAMMERS IN THE GALAXY!

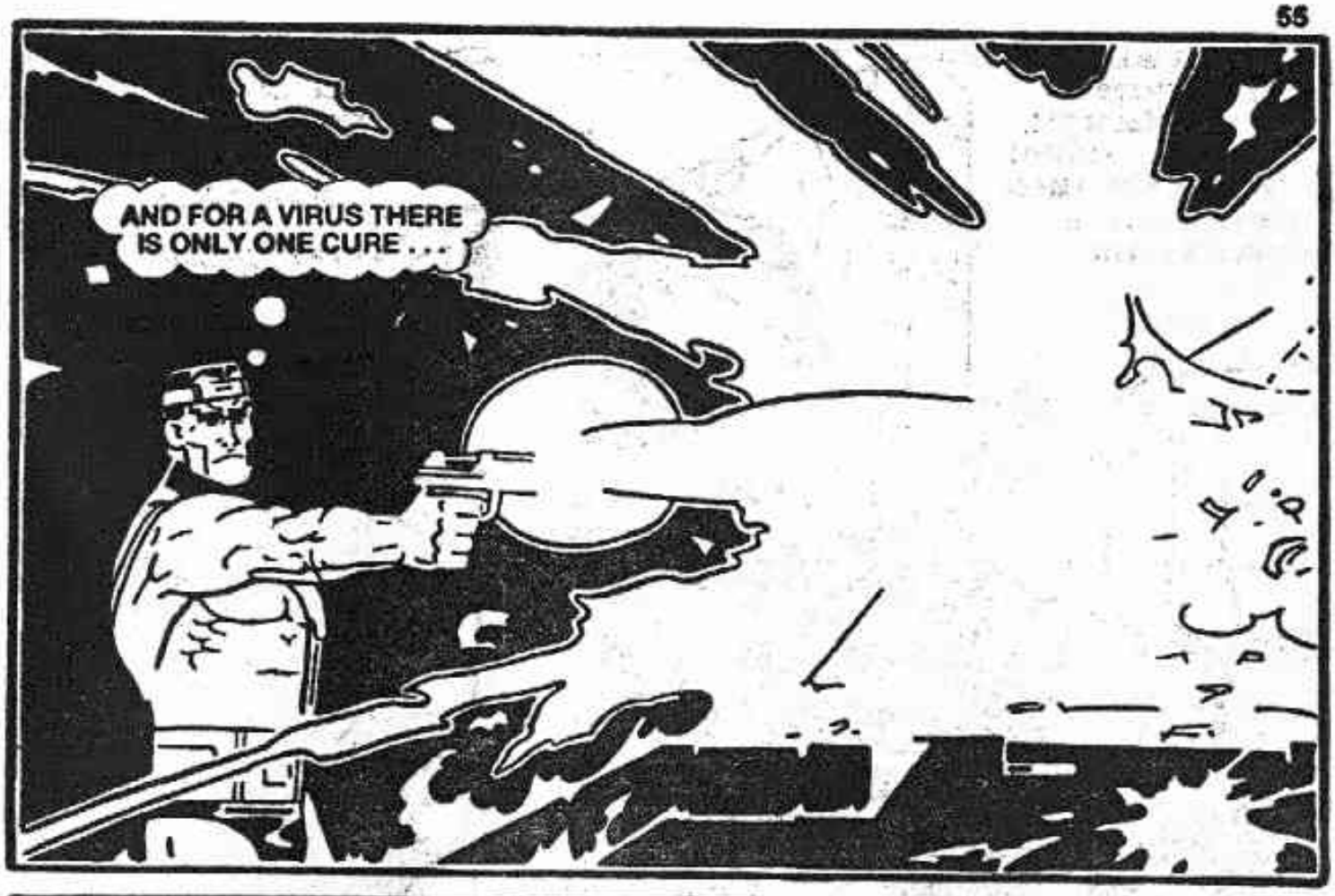

IN BAY 2—
GATE 1
NO RECEPTION COMMITTEE, SIR? DON'T TELL ME THEY'RE SHY!
TYPICAL! THE BROTHERHOOD NEVER DID HAVE THE GUTS TO COME OUT INTO THE OPEN.
BAY 2

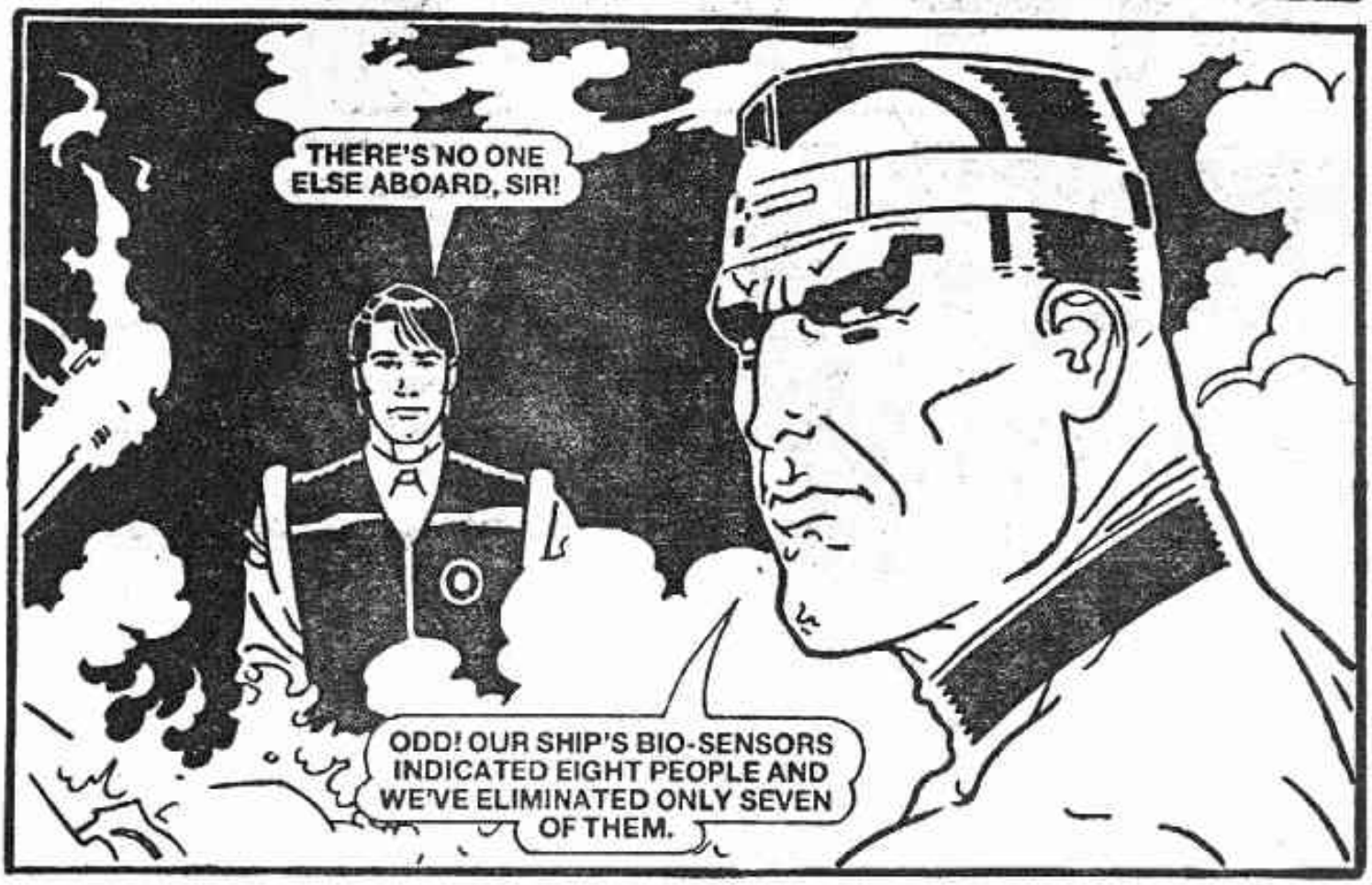
LIKE ALL CRIMOS, THEY PREFER TO . . .


. . . SNEAK UP FROM BEHIND AND AMBUSH US!
ALERTED BY HIS ELECTRONICALLY ASSISTED SENSES, CARTER TURNED AND FIRED! IT WAS OVER SO FAST THAT NOLAN DIDN'T EVEN MOVE.


THE STATION WAS STAFFED BY CRIMOS PICKED FOR THEIR TECHNICAL SKILLS. THEIR FIGHTING ABILITIES WERE POOR, WHICH MADE THEM EVEN LESS OF A MATCH FOR CARTER . . .


THEN—
IT COULD HAVE BEEN THE PERFECT FRAUD — IF LAURA HADN'T STUMBLED ON IT. THIS STATION IS ONE BIG COMPUTER VIRUS, DIVERTING MILLIONS OF FEDERAL CREDIT BONDS TO THE BROTHERHOOD. ILLEGAL IT MAY BE, BUT TECHNICALLY BRILLIANT!


AND FOR A VIRUS THERE IS ONLY ONE CURE . . .


THERE'S NO ONE ELSE ABOARD, SIR!
ODD! OUR SHIP'S BIO-SENSORS INDICATED EIGHT PEOPLE AND WE'VE ELIMINATED ONLY SEVEN OF THEM.

THEN HE MUST HAVE SNEAKED ABOARD OUR SHIP!
AND TAKEN LAURA HOSTAGE!

HURRY!
BA
2

CARTER WAS FIRST BACK . . .
ONE MORE STEP AND I'LL REMOVE HER FACE!

CARTER HAD FACED HOSTAGE SITUATIONS MANY TIMES BEFORE AND HAD RESOLVED THEM WITH COLD, UNEMOTIONAL CALM. BUT THIS TIME WAS DIFFERENT . . . THIS TIME THERE WAS ANGER . . .
IF ANY HARM COMES TO HER I'LL . . .
YOU'LL WHAT, MACHINE MAN?

I'LL KILL YOU!

I FAIL TO SEE HOW YOU CAN COME OUT OF THIS ALIVE, ANYWAY, CRIMO. THERE ARE TWO OF US AND YOUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO SURRENDER BEFORE ANY HARM COMES TO THE FEMALE. I SUGGEST YOU THINK VERY CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU MAKE YOUR NEXT MOVE — FOR IT MAY BE YOUR LAST.

OUT OF THE SHIP AND BACK TO THE STATION! ONE FALSE MOVE AND SHE'LL BE THE FIRST TO GET IT!
I'LL CATCH UP WITH YOU EVENTUALLY.

NO! IT'S A TRICK! HE'S RIGGED THE STATION TO BLOW UP AND KILL US ALL! HE CAN'T AFFORD TO LEAVE ANY WITNESSES!
LOUDMOUTH BITCH!
SEE IF I CARE!
NO . . . OH, NO!

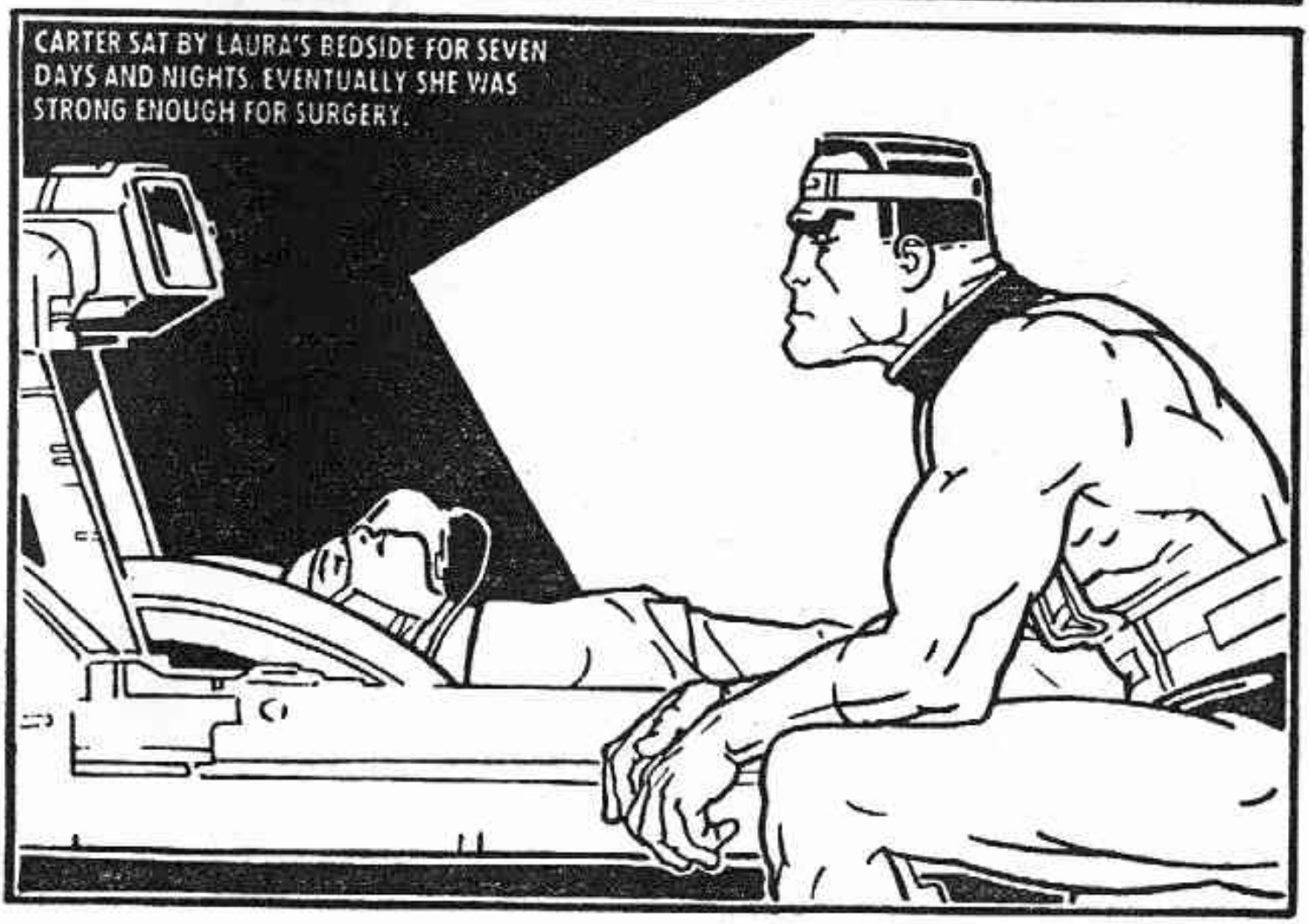
DON'T SHOOT! I SURRENDER!
KILL HIM, NOLAN . . . THEN GET ME THE FREEZE BAG. SHE'S STILL GOT A PULSE!
I'M NOT KILLING HIM, BUT HE'LL PAY FOR IT! DON'T YOU WORRY!

HE'LL PAY FOR IT, ALL RIGHT! YOU GET THE FREEZE BAG!
I'VE . . . I'VE SURRENDERED! YOU CAN'T SHOOT AN UNARMED PRISONER!

A SHORT WHILE LATER, AS THE SHIP LEFT THE DOCKING BAY, A BODY WAS RELEASED THROUGH THE STARBOARD WASTE DISPOSAL CHUTE . . .
SO YOU DIDN'T SHOOT HIM, BUT A WALK IN SPACE WITHOUT A SURVIVAL SUIT IS STILL MURDER.
I WAS JUST GETTING RID OF SOME GARBAGE . . .

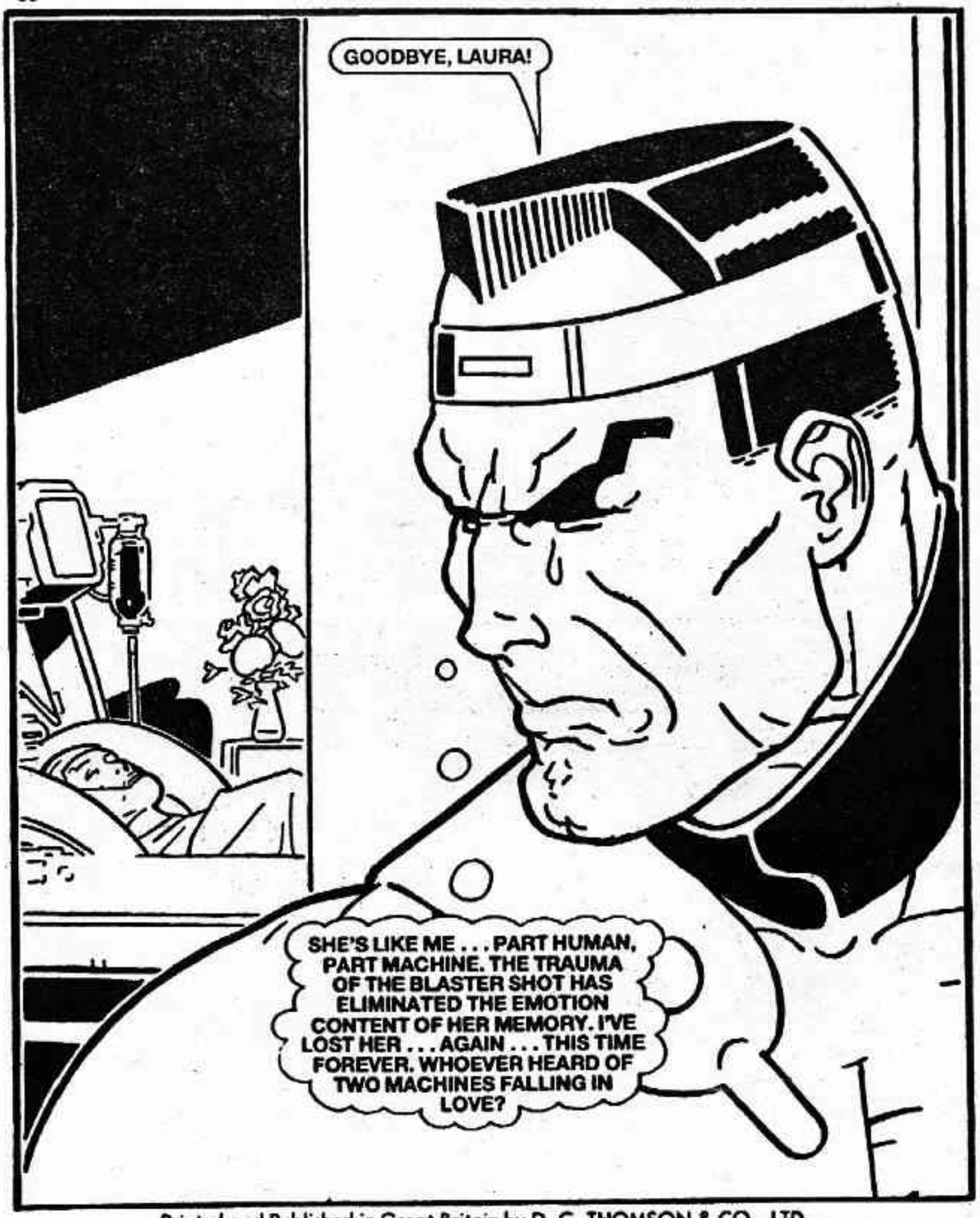
WHEN NOLAN AND CARTER REACHED HEADQUARTERS THEY REPORTED TO THE CHIEF — WHO WAS FAR FROM PLEASED—
THE CHAIRMAN OF THE FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS DISCIPLINARY DEPARTMENT IS HOPPING MAD, CARTER! NOT ONLY DID YOU STEAL HIS SHIP, YOU MURDERED A SUSPECT! YOU'LL BE CHARGED!
CHARGED WITH WHAT? YOU KNOW FULL WELL THAT NOLAN DIDN'T SEE WHAT HAPPENED. HE'S GUESSING . . . NO COURT WILL CONVICT ME BECAUSE THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT I KILLED HIM.
THE BROTHERHOOD STILL EXISTS . . . EVEN IN THIS DEPARTMENT. YOU CAN STUFF THAT IN YOUR LOCKER . . . I QUIT!
YOU CAN'T QUIT WHILE UNDER INVESTIGATION.

WAIT, CARTER!
IT'S NO GOOD, SIR. HE'S THINKING ABOUT LAURA!


CARTER SAT BY LAURA'S BEDSIDE FOR SEVEN DAYS AND NIGHTS. EVENTUALLY SHE WAS STRONG ENOUGH FOR SURGERY.

A TWO DAY OPERATION WAS A SUCCESS—
MR CARTER, YOU MAY SEE HER FOR A FEW MINUTES.
LAURA . . . HOW DO YOU FEEL?

I AM IN GOOD CONDITION.
GOOD! I BROUGHT SOME FLOWERS.
AN UNNECESSARY SHOW OF EMOTION.
ER . . . YES! I HAVE TO GO.



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DON'T MISS

THIS MONTH'S OTHER ACTION-PACKED ADVENTURE

NOW ON SALE

THE TERMINATION

Carter, the cold cop, didn't have an emotion in his microchipped body. That was until she came into his life again . . . the reason for his half man, half machine state. Laura, dark-eyed, beautiful, clever, funny — and responsible for his unhuman body and mind. Laura, the woman he once loved, a long time ago when the world was a different place, the woman who awakened feelings not possible in a mandroid. But there were others who were interested in Laura . . . those who had marked her down for Termination.

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